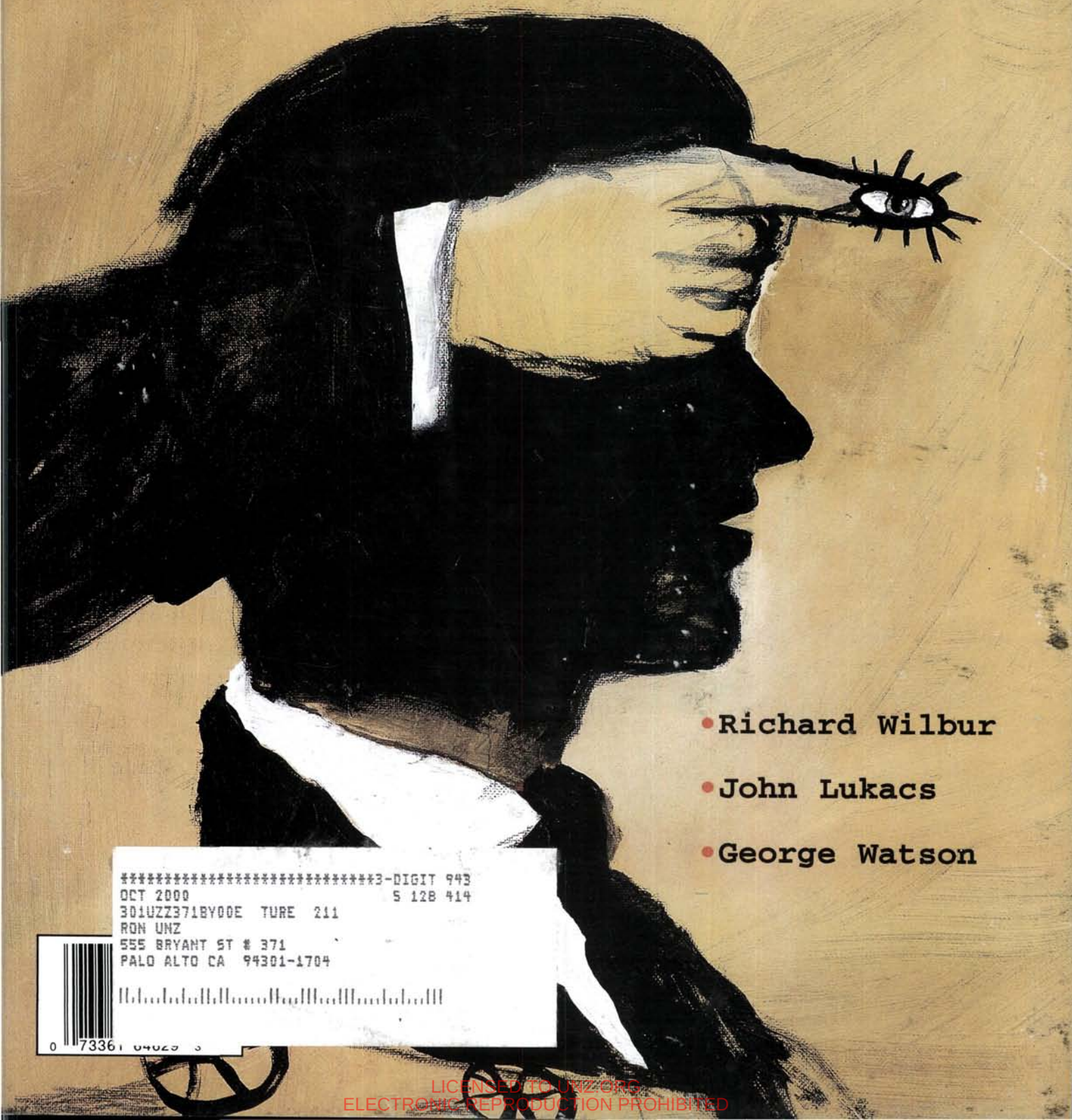
Chronicles

September 1997 A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE $3.95

Education *and the* American Elite



- Richard Wilbur
- John Lukacs
- George Watson

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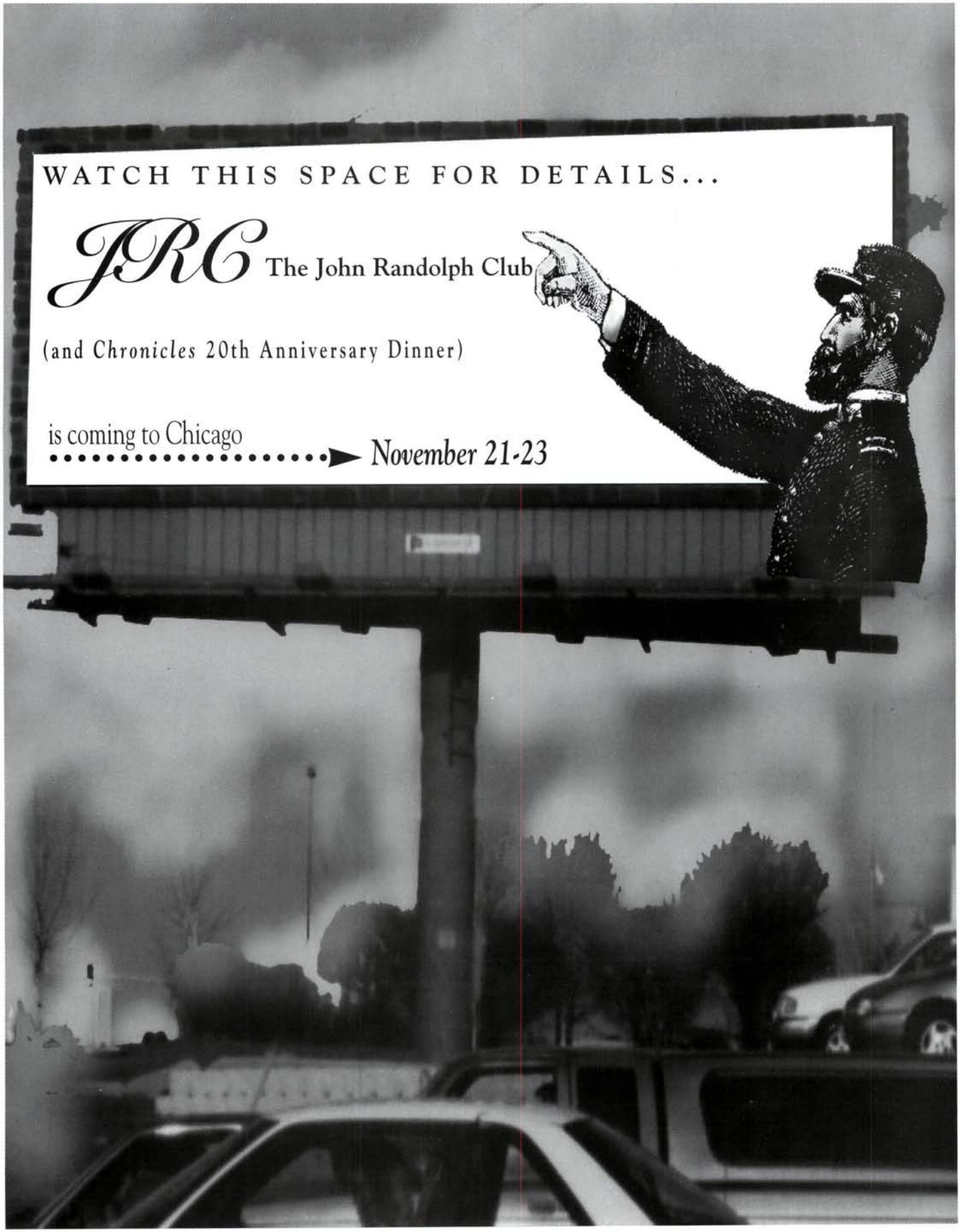
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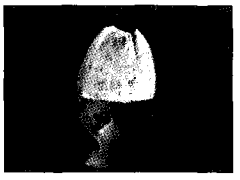

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A publication of The Rockford Institute.
Editorial and Advertising Offices:
934 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103.
Editorial Phone: (815) 964-5054.
Advertising Phone: (815) 964-5813.
Subscription Department: P.O. Box 800,
Mount Morris, IL 61054. Call 1-800-877-5459.

U.S.A. Newsstand Distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., One Media Way, 12406 Rt. 250 Milan, Ohio 44848-9705

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Chronicles (ISSN 0887-5731) is published monthly for $39.00 (foreign subscriptions add $12 for surface delivery, $48 for Air Mail) per year by The Rockford Institute, 934 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103-7061. Preferred periodical postage paid at Rockford, IL and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Chronicles*, P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054.

The views expressed in *Chronicles* are the authors' alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Rockford Institute or of its directors. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

Vol. 21, No. 9 September 1997

Printed in the United States of America

On David Horowitz

It's a pity that *Chronicles* chose a shallow and vindictive reviewer like Justin Raimondo ("David Horowitz and the Ex-Communist Confessional," June) to vet *Radical Son* for the *Chronicles* audience. Justin's animus toward me (based on a public clash we had some years ago) is transparent enough, but his reading of my text is so bizarre that the *Chronicles* audience is offered little clue as to the contents of my book, let alone insight into its place in the literature of anticommunist memoirs, which is the pretense under which his review is written.

To set me up for invidious comparison, Raimondo praises the ex-communist Benjamin Gitlow for writing "nary a word of criticism" of his parents, nor attributing any aspect of his career to "parental influence." (Raimondo makes no attempt to justify why this should be praiseworthy in any writer of autobiography.) Then Raimondo turns to my text: "Contrast this with the victimological whining of Horowitz":

> What was my own choice? In the beginning I hardly had one. I understood early that my parents' political religion was really the center of their moral life. This meant that the condition of their parental love was that I embrace their political faith.

The passage in which this offending comment occurs actually forms the prelude to my entrance into a communist-run nursery school at age 18 months. But this does not phase Raimondo: "It would never have occurred to Gitlow to blame his father and mother for his political mistakes, but the Oprahization of American culture makes it possible for Horowitz to demonize his parents."

Readers of *Radical Son* will know that I do nothing of the kind. Other reviewers have described my account of my relationship with my father, for example, as "poignant" and "poetic." Raimondo is so determined to demonize me that he winds up defending the communist community I grew up in. Thus, at another point in the text I observe that the people in this community were "permanent conspirators in a revolutionary drama" who posed as "progressives" to disarm the unsuspecting public while "their real politics were conducted far from view." Raimondo offers this as a further example of unfair attacks on my parents. Defending them, he writes: "Horowitz does not deny that people such as his parents were operating under the constant surveillance of government agencies, including the FBI and local police departments, and . . . yet he writes, 'what else could they have expected?' After all, they 'wanted to overthrow existing institutions.' In other words, they deserved it." Well, yes.

Raimondo's defense, of course, is the Communist Party's own explanation of its deceptions and Fifth Amendment demurrals—the FBI and the government red-baiters made us do it. In other words, if we (communists) refuse to answer honestly as to what our real politics are, it is because we will be persecuted for our ideas. *Au contraire*, Justin. It was the conspiratorial activities of the communist movement that made them dishonest and made it necessary for the FBI to surveil them.

Because Raimondo's agenda is to attack me personally rather than to review my book, he manages to get everything wrong, even its central drama, which is my involvement with the Black Panthers. "Typically, when he discovers that his Black Panther heroes are murderers and thugs, he blames other people":

> Anger welled inside me. Why
> hadn't Joel said anything before?
> Why hadn't Charles? Or Troy?
> Why hadn't they warned me?
> The answer was clear: they did not
> want to be accused of betraying
> the Left.

Readers of *Radical Son* will know that I am not exculpating myself here but only explaining why all leftists, myself included, were so ready to cover up the crimes of the left. On the page before this passage I wrote: "[My parents'] political ideals had embarrassed them, making them complicit in others' crimes. I had resolved that I would not repeat their mistake. Now I was guilty myself." Get it, Justin? Guilty *myself*.

There is not a substantive statement I have made that Raimondo doesn't ques-

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tion, unless it suits his prosecutorial purposes. Raimondo refers to a passage in my text where I am approached by a KGB agent, who invites me to a series of lunches. Raimondo: "These discussions were always held at the best restaurants [as though I had chosen them!], and on such occasions Horowitz *claims* to have argued against Soviet repression." [Emphasis added.] On one of these occasions, the agent stuffed an envelope in my pocket. Raimondo: "Horowitz says he 'knew instinctively what was in the envelope,' but *claims* to have been 'so frightened that I didn't dare remove it until I reached home.'" [Emphasis added.] At home, I opened it and discovered that it contained 150 one dollar bills, and returned it.

Raimondo: "Although he *says* [my emphasis] he returned the money 'at our next meeting,' a question arises. Why did he open the envelope? If he 'instinctively' knew it was money, then he must have wanted to know *how much*." In fact, the reaction I had to the money was not delayed and was this: "I was not so much surprised [by the money] as dumbfounded. How could these people be so stupid in their own interest, and so reckless with mine? . . . they thought nothing of putting my work (to say nothing of my life) in jeopardy by attempting to recruit me as an agent. The thought enraged me."

Now I ask the reader of this passage 1) Why would I report this incident if I was actually tempted by the offer and only haggling over the price, especially if I wanted to conceal that fact? 2) Why would I recount another incident in which I actually *did* commit treason, if I was intent (as Raimondo implies) on covering up a mere flirtation with treason earlier? In fact, my account is exactly the way it happened, and Raimondo's attempt to prosecute me for allegedly failing to admit what I freely admit a few pages later only shows how relentless is his determination to put me in a bad light, and how pathetic his execution of that task.

There is really no point in going further, but I cannot resist one additional comment. With typical reckless disregard for the facts, Raimondo accuses me of being an opportunist: "Horowitz . . . swims with the tide, not against it, and breathlessly announces, at this late date that . . . the Black Panthers were not Boy Scouts." Readers of *Radical Son* will know that I risked life and limb, lost family and friends, to bring the story of the Panther murders to light—over a 20-year period—and have been punished professionally by the liberal literary culture for doing so. If it were not for my efforts, no one—not even Justin Raimondo—would know about the Panther murders described in *Radical Son*.

—David Horowitz
Center for the Study of Popular Culture
Los Angeles, CA

Mr. Raimondo Replies:

It is truly odd to be called vindictive by a man who celebrates the persecution of his own parents. This unattractive theme is further illustrated when Horowitz defends the firing of his father from his job as a teacher because he refused to deny that he was a member of the Communist Party: after all, "what actually happened to my father" wasn't all that bad. American Communists "were neither executed nor tortured, and spent hardly any time in jail." In Horowitz's book, his father should have been grateful to his persecutors instead of defiant: *Radical Son* is a case study in the distortion of personality by ideology—in this case, neoconservative ideology.

In spite of his strenuous attempt to wriggle out of it, Horowitz never explains just why he didn't simply hand that money-filled envelope back to the KGB agent right there on the street. Horowitz reports an incident that raises questions he is not prepared to answer because, in works of this kind, vanity trumps common sense: after all, the KGB had deemed him important enough to recruit.

Horowitz justifies police state methods and the virtual outlawing of the Communist Party on the grounds that its members were engaged in "conspiratorial activities" and that it was therefore necessary to "surveil them." Like so many of those who have made the odyssey from left to right, Horowitz has merely changed the color of his flag, while retaining the statist core of his beliefs. At a time when it is the right that is under attack from government agencies, and when the threat of government surveillance is quite real in an atmosphere of anti-"extremist" hysteria, how long before Horowitz is calling for the same methods to be used against his enemies on the right?

As for any personal "animus" on my part, I should state for the record that its genesis had nothing to do with his enraged response to my attack on Martin Luther King, Jr., at a 1993 National Review conference, for at the time I hardly knew the man. But Horowitz should know that one of the risks of autobiography is that the author will inadvertently reveal himself to be a thoroughly disagreeable and even contemptible person.

On H.P. Lovecraft

While I was grateful for the length and detail of Samuel Francis's review ("At the Heart of Darkness," May) of my biography of Lovecraft and my edition of Lovecraft's *Miscellaneous Writings*, there are some serious errors and misconceptions in the review that require correction. First, it's peculiar that Mr. Francis begins his review asserting that Lovecraft's "life and writing career . . . can only be judged failures" and yet concludes by saying that he was "one of America's last free men, living his life as he wanted to live it" and that his supernatural fiction will survive "as long as that genre of literature is read at all." If this is failure, I can hardly imagine what success is like.

Mr. Francis also seems to have a difficult time with Lovecraft's philosophy of cosmic indifferentism, whereby the vastness (both spatially and temporally) of the universe necessitates the belief in the inconsequence (on the cosmic scale) of humanity. He refers to it as a "dismal creed" and feels that it was "something of a crutch for an emotional cripple." It does not seem to have occurred to him that the philosophy is very likely to be true. It accords with all the findings of science, and Lovecraft repeated it frequently in essays and correspondence not because he was somehow maniacally attached to it but because he knew that it was an unusual worldview that others—especially those nurtured on the comforting falsehoods of religion—would find a "dismal creed."

It is absurd to call Lovecraft a "Nazi"—I do not think Mr. Francis realizes what he is saying here. Lovecraft was one of many in England and America who welcomed Hitler's rise to power in 1933 (as a means of reviving Germany after what were believed to be the unfair conditions imposed upon it by the Ver-

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sailles Treaty), but he did apparently repudiate Hitler in late 1936 when he heard from an acquaintance who had just returned from Germany how the Nazi regime was treating the Jews. Remember that Lovecraft died in 1937, long before the true horrors of the Nazi regime were revealed. Incidentally, Mr. Francis is diametrically wrong in saying that I maintain that "Lovecraft's racialism was largely irrelevant to his writing"; I have long believed that Lovecraft's racial views are critical to understanding much of his literary work, and I explore this in detail in my biography. What I do maintain is that the intellectual error of racism does not necessarily vitiate the rest of Lovecraft's philosophy, which has substantial merits of its own.

It does not appear that Mr. Francis is very familiar with Lovecraft beyond what he has found in the books under review. Lovecraft is indeed a very difficult writer and thinker to assimilate, and Mr. Francis will pardon me if I say that he has plenty of homework to do. Still, his diligence at least is to be commended.

—S.T. Joshi
New York, NY

Dr. Francis Replies:

I have to admit that it is a rare compliment to be praised for my "diligence" by a man who has spent his life writing a 700-page biography of Lovecraft, reediting four volumes of the stories of Lovecraft, coediting at least five more volumes of the letters of Lovecraft, compiling a bibliography of Lovecraft, editing two collections of essays about Lovecraft, editing another collection of the journalism of Lovecraft, writing a monograph about Lovecraft, and editing several anthologies of the fiction of Lovecraft. I am always prepared to be instructed in my "homework" on Lovecraft by such a scholar, even if the frequently crippled prose and thought of the man who is clearly the only subject Mr. Joshi can talk about is a bit too "difficult" for such beginners as me.

In fact, I read all of Lovecraft's stories 30-some years ago, and have reread the better of them over the years since, as well as De Camp's biography and various portions of Lovecraft's letters. While I readily recognize that Mr. Joshi is without peer in the World's Greatest H.P. Lovecraft Expert contest, I think I know a little about his subject and have long maintained an interest in it.

I do not see how the life and writing career of a man and professional writer who was unable to complete high school, unable to hold a job, unable to sustain a marriage to a woman who loved him, unable to support himself by his writing, unable to attract serious critical attention, and unable to publish a single book during his lifetime can be judged anything but failures. Nor do I see any contradiction between that judgment and my conclusion that Lovecraft's best work will survive as long as people read the kind of stories he wrote. Lovecraft's life and career were failures; his writing itself, at least at its best, was not.

I do not "have a difficult time with Lovecraft's philosophy," but someone should explain to Mr. Joshi that the belief that the universe and human life are meaningless is neither new nor unquestioned. For that matter, while Mr. Joshi may find this view of life invigorating, most people do indeed regard it as "dismal," whether it is true or not.

Lovecraft seems to have been fond of trotting out his philosophy whenever he was at the point of retreating from some personal challenge that ordinary people do not usually find difficult. That is one reason I suggested it was a "crutch" for his obviously abnormal personality; by denying that life has any meaning, Lovecraft could absolve himself of conventional social and personal responsibilities. But I also made clear my view that Lovecraft's worldview was a serious one that he held, expressed, and developed in a serious way.

I did not quite call Lovecraft a "Nazi." I wrote that he was "an extreme reactionary and racialist, if not an outright Nazi." I qualified this description precisely because I recognize that Lovecraft's attitude toward Hitler and the Nazis was complicated, but it is hardly "absurd" to say that "one . . . who welcomed Hitler's rise to power in 1933" was a Nazi. What else would Mr. Joshi call a person who welcomed Hitler's rise to power?

Mr. Joshi says Lovecraft repudiated Hitler "in late 1936," and so he did, as I mentioned in the review. But Lovecraft died in March 1937, which means that for most of the time Hitler was in power during Lovecraft's life, he had *not* repudiated him. Lovecraft did express concern about the Versailles Treaty, and he disliked the brutishness of the Nazis, but what mainly attracted him to Hitler was the ideological content of German National Socialism—its authoritarianism, its elitism, its racialism, its anti-Semitism, and its socialism. His sympathy for these doctrines was such that it would be perfectly reasonable to call him a Nazi, and on that basis alone he would certainly be so described today, regardless of whatever reservations he expressed about Hitler and his policies.

In any case, I do not and did not judge Lovecraft or anyone else on the validity of his beliefs but on his personal conduct, and whatever he believed or whenever he believed it, I see no moral flaw in Lovecraft simply for holding a particular opinion, whether the opinion was right or wrong. Perhaps when Mr. Joshi completes his expeditions into the life, letters, and laundry lists of his favorite subject, he will find time to peruse my review with as much attention as he has devoted to his hero.

On Science Fiction, R.I.P.

I don't think I disagree with any of Thomas Bertonneau's negative remarks ("Science Fiction, R.I.P.," May) about what is passed off as science fiction today. But the situation is far less gloomy than he fears. There are plenty of hard science fiction writers, with a sound backing in science and philosophy, and genuinely spiritual concerns. Consider, for example, Stephen Baxter, Gregory Benford, C.J. Cherryh, G.A. Effinger, Peter Hamilton, John Varley. There are even some excellent fantasy writers who evade Thomas Bertonneau's strictures: John Crowley, Patricia McKillip, Sheri Tepper. Even Robert Jordan, whose work is generally classified as junk, actually writes intelligently, and absorbingly, about treachery and temptation.

The Stapleton Archive is housed here at the University of Liverpool, along with the Science Fiction Foundation Library. Inquiries from would-be scholars of the subject are welcomed.

—Stephen R.L. Clark,
Dean, Faculty of Arts
University of Liverpool
Liverpool, England

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THE CHINA LOBBY was in full swing this summer, and once again the "If We Can Sell Every Chinaman Just One" crowd carried the day. By a wider than expected margin, the House of Representatives defeated a resolution revoking China's Most Favored Nation status, letting both the Senate and the President off the hook.

As Alan Tonelson of the U.S. Business and Industrial Council has pointed out, America's corporate China lobby claims that "revoking MFN would shut U.S. companies out of a huge and vigorously expanding market for goods produced in the United States, hurting hundreds of thousands of American workers, as well as American companies. But China's meager imports from America"—less than what we sell to Belgium—"indicate that most U.S. companies (as well as their Hong Kong and Taiwanese counterparts) value China for a completely different reason—as a production site for goods they want to sell to America. China as a production site and export platform for American business mainly fattens the profits of U.S. multinational corporations at the expense of American workers whose output has been replaced by Chinese factories. For the up to 40 percent of Chinese exports sent to the United States, this intra-firm trade hits American workers especially hard."

However, trade (which should have been among the chief reasons to *revoke* MFN but was actually the trump card assuring its continuation) hardly figured in the public debate. Instead, the discussion primarily centered on human rights, repression of democracy activists, official persecution of Chinese Christians, proliferation of missiles and weapons technology, Hong Kong, and Taiwan—issues which, while not negligible, do not have a direct and immediate impact on Americans' livelihood. What was striking about the debate was how little it concerned Americans' interests and how much it rested on the competing claims of how best to bring about democracy in China. In short, it was less a debate about policy than about pedagogy, with America posing as teacher and a five-thousand-year-old civilization presumed to be a gaggle of obstreperous children. MFN proponents, ignoring China's brazen mercantilism, sang the usual hosannas to their god, Free Trade, as the germ of great social and moral transformations, with China's sweatshops the petri dishes in which Jeffersonianism is being cultured. Conversely, too many MFN opponents also see China largely as a "problem" to be "solved" not by free trade but by a swift kick in the pants, after which the same social transformation will presumably occur.

The United States should withdraw MFN from China not because of what may or may not result in China but as a matter of American self-interest and self-respect. The sheer one-sidedness of our trade relations—the Opium Wars in reverse—should be reason enough, with Christian persecution, forced abortion, and, believe it or not, the human consumption of aborted children sufficient to convince the indecisive. We should not flatter ourselves that we have either the wisdom or the ability to determine when, how, or with what China should replace its odious gerontocratic regime. But at the same time we are under no obligation to be friends with that regime and enrich it at the expense of our own economic interests.

Whether or not MFN is withdrawn, a few other issues deserve serious thought as Chinese communism degenerates into Han national bolshevism. As Beijing has stated, the sequence will be Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan. With regard to the last, independence is no longer an option, if it ever was. For that matter, the salient feature of Kuomintang rule on the island is that the KMT agrees with the mainland on the one point that cannot be compromised: that Taiwan is a part of sovereign China. Assuming that Beijing has indeed abandoned Marxism/Leninism, it is to be expected that some sort of arrangement will be reached that allows continued KMT administration.

Taiwan aside, the aspirations of the American political class to build a U.N.-led global order enforced by the United States will increasingly clash with Beijing's determination to place its sovereignty above all other considerations. Instead, the United States should seriously consider an apportionment of American, Chinese, and Russian spheres of influence in the Far East and the Western Pacific. In Central Asia, China (along with India) will continue to be a bulwark against the rising tide of Islamic militancy unleashed by the Iranian revolution and the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Chinese authorities, no matter who ends up holding power in the Forbidden City, will suppress the Uighur-led *jihad* with whatever force is necessary. Belgrade may let the Serbs be driven from Sarajevo today, Paris may abandon Marseilles to the Algerians tomorrow, but Beijing will not tolerate the eradication of the Han from Xinjiang or the creation of an Islamic superpower in Asia.

Finally, the fundraising scandal involving Chinese agents of influence, the Clinton White House, and the Democratic Party is just a peep into how thoroughly compromised much of Washington is by foreign interests. Beijing's capitalization on the wealth and vitality of the overseas Chinese community—and the American citizenship of many of its members—may force us to face the taboo question of migratory subversion. The Balkanization of America is not purely a domestic phenomenon but a vulnerability that will be increasingly exploited by foreign governments trying to skew American policies to their own purposes.

—*Dhimitrios Gheorghiou*

EUGENE NARRETT has lost his job as a professor of English at Framingham State College in Massachusetts. An outspoken conservative who never misses a chance to bash feminism and liberalism in his columns for the *Middlesex County News* and in periodic essays for this and other magazines, Narrett thinks that his politics had much to do with his firing. Narrett's view has been seconded by conservative columnists in the Boston area and by the National Association of Scholars, which has written outraged letters to the FSC administration. At the very least, his firing and the incidents leading up to it raise questions about whether the First Amendment is still in effect at a school that the taxpayers are forced to fund.

Narrett's qualifications are not in

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doubt. He was well-liked by his students and had received glowing evaluations from his department in his four years at FSC. The holder of a doctorate in comparative literature from Columbia, Narrett had delivered guest lectures at colleges throughout New England and had published papers in academic journals. As for Narrett's colleagues in the English Department, their professional activities off campus are mostly limited to poetry readings at a local bookstore; two tenured women do not have doctorates, and one has a degree in a field other than English. Eugene Narrett was, arguably, the most distinguished and widely published professor in his department.

Perhaps to compensate for its obscurity, FSC strove to be on the cutting edge of political correctness. According to Narrett, the school brought in a "Professor of Diversity" and promoted feminist professors who have publicly made sneering comments about men. Narrett's application for a tenure-track position was reviewed (and turned down) by a professor who had reportedly referred to one of her colleagues as a "worthless white man."

Narrett's writings in the local newspaper, which is in no way affiliated with the college, were increasingly unpopular with his colleagues—and with FSC's students. After Narrett published a trenchant column on feminism in the *Middlesex County News*, anonymous posters accusing him of misogyny and making scurrilous remarks about his personal life started appearing around campus. Narrett claims that Jack Ling, the administrator in charge of harassment cases, failed to take action. On another occasion, Mary Murphy, a tenured professor, reportedly stormed into Narrett's office and screamed that his criticisms of feminism had "gone too far" and "had to stop" immediately. She apparently wanted the college to insist that Narrett obtain prior approval from the school to publish any future article—a clear violation of academic freedom. A harassment complaint he filed against Professor Murphy was summarily thrown out.

For his failure to embrace radical feminism, Narrett was harassed and even menaced by his colleagues. A senior colleague stood over Narrett in the faculty dining room one day and harangued him, and another professor got into the habit of stalking up and down the hallway outside Narrett's office. In September 1996, Professor Narrett's office was suddenly moved to a closet-sized room without telephone and computer, a deprivation that not even beginning professors have to put up with. According to Narrett's written account, he was told that he "can use the secretary's phone" to make calls.

Last March, several students approached Professor Narrett and said that they were interested in taking his classes in the fall but could not find his name in the 1997-98 catalogue. The reason was simple: no one had bothered to tell Narrett, but he had been fired. Despite his glowing evaluations of Narrett's teaching, department chairman Alan Feldman insisted he had the right to sack Narrett without giving a reason, which runs counter to a clause in Narrett's contract which bars the department from firing him without explanation.

Although Narrett's writings have not been cited officially as a reason for his firing, his credentials as a teacher and scholar beg the question why the department would so abruptly terminate him for reasons that remain hazy. Narrett says that Feldman did finally come forth with an after-the-fact rationalization: Narrett had broken his contract by asking to teach a fall course he had taught in the past, instead of one he had never taught before (although Narrett never insisted on this). Meanwhile, the college has thrown out Narrett's two "wrongful termination grievances," sending a strong message that a worthless white man who has run afoul of the thought police need not reapply.

—*Michael Washburn*

AN ECUMENICAL *jihad* was the subject of a conference, "Not of This World," held at Rose Hill College in Aiken, South Carolina, last May. Here Eastern Orthodox Christians hosted Roman Catholics and evangelical Protestants in an effort to discover common ground and build on it. In a surprising demarche, Boston College professor of philosophy Peter Kreeft delivered an address entitled "Ecumenical Jihad" (recently published in a book edited by Professor James Cutsinger of the University of South Carolina). Under the slogan "Today = Decay," Professor Kreeft briefly outlined the social degeneracy of our day, giving particular emphasis to the sexual licentiousness of the West. According to Kreeft, God has let Satan loose upon the world, thus causing Protestants, Catholics, and Orthodox to make common cause against him. But then came his ecumenical bombshell: a proposal that the three groups of Christians include not only Jews but also Muslims in this "ecumenical" effort.

His choice of the word "*jihad*," an Arab term for holy war, waged at times against Christians and Jews, is a clue to his surprising thesis. "We should not balk at having Muhammad's followers as our allies against Satan," he argues. Muslims are often "better Christians" than wimpy nominal Christians, since they honor Jesus and will defend His name against insults—such as removing crucifixes from Catholic schools—while Christians at most wring their hands and look sad. Kreeft envisages the "five kings of orthodoxy," i.e., the five great monotheistic traditions—Judaism, Orthodoxy, Catholicism, Protestantism, and Islam—making common cause against Satan-inspired social degeneracy. The difficulty is that very few Muslims are interested in making common cause with Christians, to say nothing of Jews.

It should be self-evident that a conception of orthodoxy that includes not merely Christians but Jews and Muslims is itself extremely wimpy. The area of agreement between Protestants, Catholics, and Orthodox is considerable—they share the same ecumenical creeds—and it is possible to define them all as "orthodox" on the major doctrines of Christianity, even though there are considerable differences between them on topics such as the authority of tradition, the meaning of justification, and the sacraments. It is also true that the Protestant and Roman Catholic communions, and to a lesser extent, the Eastern Orthodox, contain individuals and groups who question or even repudiate the fundamentals of the traditional faith. Consequently, the traditionalists within the three confessions are coming to see that they have more in common with one another, despite the difference in labels, than they do with liberals in their own confessions. However, most of what they have in common, as reflected in the ecumenical creeds, is not shared with Jews, let alone Muslims.

To label Jews as "orthodox" in this context is strange, for although Christianity originated in Judaism and shares with the older religion the doctrines of monotheism and of biblical authority, the Christian doctrines of the Trinity and of the Incarnation of Christ—

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touchstones for Christian orthodoxy—are clearly incompatible with Jewish convictions. Some Christians and Jews have sought to bridge this gap with a "two covenant" theory, arguing that the Mosaic covenant is the means of salvation for Jews, while the "new covenant" of Christianity applies to Gentiles.

The history of relations between Christians and Jews is a long and troubled one, with many excesses performed by Christians (the worst of the atrocities, the Nazi genocide, was the work of people who repudiated Christianity). Since World War II it has become increasingly common for Jews and Christians to work together, and this might seem to favor Professor Kreeft's project. However, it is precisely the evangelical Protestants, the prime Protestant candidates to enlist in Professor Kreeft's ecumenical *jihad*, who continue to evangelize Jews, thus provoking antagonism, particularly among the less observant Jews.

To create a common front among Protestants, Catholics, and Orthodox is hard enough; to secure the cooperation of Jews in such a common effort, even if they share common moral values, is more difficult, but it is not impossible. The proposal to recruit and include Muslims is, however, highly problematic. Islam is indeed monotheistic, and many of its ethical principles parallel those of Judaism and Christianity. Nevertheless, from its birth, Islam has engaged in aggressive wars of conquest against the Christian lands of the Near East and North Africa, expanding primarily in the wake of conquest, even invading Spain and France, until it was stopped by Charles Martel at Tours in 732. In Asia Minor, the Islamic Arabs and Turks waged war against the Christian empire of Constantinople for 800 years, a policy interrupted for several decades by the Crusades but which resumed to capture Constantinople in 1453. After that, the Turks moved aggressively against southeastern Europe until finally stopped at Vienna in 1682.

While Muslims receive toleration and sometimes even state subsidies in Western democracies, in the countries they dominate Christianity is barely tolerated, and in some cases is aggressively persecuted. Moreover, the nations that consistently line up against Israel are predominantly Muslim. Under such circumstances a *jihad* is not likely to be ecumenical. By attempting too grand a coalition, Professor Kreeft may have undercut more realistic efforts at making common cause.

—*Harold O.J. Brown*

EPICYCLES:

• National Sovereignty: **The Bricker Amendment** lives on. Representative Helen Chenoweth (R-ID) has resurrected the amendment 43 years after it missed ratification by one vote in the United States Senate. Chenoweth's House Joint Resolution 83 would forbid "any foreign power or any international organization to supervise, control, or adjudicate rights in this Constitution or any other matter essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of the United States or the several states." When asked by *Human Events* this summer about the need for such an amendment, Chenoweth expertly recounted past Supreme Court decisions that have allowed a foreign treaty or organization to supersede state law as well as the slew of recent international agreements that threaten state sovereignty, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention, which could soon force some 8,000 American businesses to open their doors to U.N. inspection. "If we do not have sovereignty," concluded Chenoweth, "we do not have self-government." Such common sense is startling for its rarity today.

• States' Rights: For all the wrong reasons, the Supreme Court made the right decision in ***Boerne* v. *Texas***, striking down the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA). The Court argued that, by passing RFRA, Congress had usurped powers normally reserved to the judiciary. In reality, Congress had usurped powers normally reserved to the *states* and *localities*. The Christian Coalition's favorite piece of legislation was an apparent godsend to prison inmates with too much time on their hands, who sued successfully to engage in "religious practices" ranging from Santeria and voodoo to Satanism, Christian Identity, and Rastafarianism.

As soon as *Boerne* v. *Texas* headed to the Supreme Court, the Christian Coalition and others saw the handwriting on the wall. Through Oklahoma Representative Ernest Istook, they introduced the Religious Freedom Amendment in Congress. A floor vote is expected this fall, but don't expect the debate to focus on the real issue: why the religion lobby is hellbent on subverting both Christianity and American federalism.

• Free Trade Benefits: President Clinton and leading congressmen claimed that they would reconsider **NAFTA** if, after a reasonable period, it hadn't led to better economic conditions for American workers. Well, it's been almost four years, and according to the Clinton administration's own numbers, NAFTA has failed. In a report released in July, the administration admits that 99,497 workers have been certified as losing jobs because of NAFTA. The trade deficit with Canada has doubled to $21.7 billion, and the trade surplus with Mexico is now a trade deficit of $17.5 billion. The media claimed that the administration believes NAFTA has created up to 160,000 new American jobs, but the report simply states that these jobs are "dependent" on post-NAFTA trade (many, if not all, were around before NAFTA).

But don't underestimate the optimism of NAFTA proponents. According to Commerce Secretary William Daley, these numbers actually prove that the administration and its running dogs in Congress were right, and opponents of NAFTA, from Pat Buchanan and Ross Perot to Ralph Nader and the Sierra Club, were wrong. In an interview with the *Chicago Tribune*, Daley claimed that the administration's predictions were "much closer to what has occurred overall with . . . NAFTA and the benefits of increased exports and job creation." So NAFTA has been a "boon" for Americans. And dead men don't vote in Chicago.

OBITER DICTA: Timothy Murphy, a poet whose work appeared in our July issue, has contributed a new poem to *Chronicles* this month. A resident of Fargo, North Dakota, Mr. Murphy has had personal experience with the flooding he describes. The other poet this month is **Jared Carter** of Indianapolis. Mr. Carter's first collection of verse, *Work, For the Night Is Coming*, won the Walt Whitman Award for 1980; his second, *After the Rain*, won the Poets' Prize for 1995. *Chronicles* is illustrated this month by **Anna Mycek-Wodecki**, the art director of *Chronicles*. Her work has appeared in exhibitions in Warsaw, Paris, Wallsee, Austria, and New York City.

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Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Bad Eggs

by Thomas Fleming

The rich ye shall always have with you is a truth our Savior in his mercy never declared to us. That the poor should be a permanent fact of human society is discouraging enough, especially for modern Americans convinced there is no problem that cannot be fixed, no sin that is without a cure. Even more offensive to our sensibilities, however, is the intractable problem of the rich and powerful.

Confronted by the reality of entrenched wealth and power, Americans experience violent mood swings, alternating between egalitarian denial and populist outrage. We are capable of saying, if not quite in the same breath, that "America is a classless society," and that David Rockefeller or the Council on Foreign Relations are behind everything from presidential elections to mortgage rates to African coups. The foundation for both of these contradictory views is the conviction that elite classes are unnecessary, at least in the New World. The upper classes, viewed from down on the farm or from the suburban development built on its ruins, are either self-seeking parasites that contribute nothing to society or, at best, the decorative window dummies that adorned the courts of the later Bourbons.

This is a dangerous delusion—the Devil likes nothing better than to have his existence doubted. When elite classes outlive their usefulness, as they do inevitably, the disparity between their privileges and their utility is the source of social discontent and of a revolution that leads to the establishment of a new elite. It is foolish to speak of "betraying" the revolution, since the ultimate point of any revolution is the succession to power of the revolutionary leaders. When the late Donald Warren's Middle American rebels succeed in overthrowing the present regime, they will gain more sympathetic masters, perhaps, but masters they will have. From the populist perspective, the great objectives should be the destruction of an arrogant and alien ruling class and its replacement by an authentic, homegrown aristocracy that reflects the character and aspirations of the people.

Mankind without leadership is a mere mob, and there has never been a time (*pace* Augustine) that some of us did not command and others obey, and "when people have to obey other people's orders, equality is out of the question." John Locke, that ideologue of Middle American terrorists, was wrong. There could never have been, even in the theoretical sense given by John Rawls, an "original contract," because wives and children have always been subject to husbands and fathers. The natural rights and human rights that supposedly derive from a state of nature are mere will-o'-the-wisps leading us to destruction.

The idle rich and the frivolous aristocrat are almost universal stereotypes. The Roman plebs was so convinced of patrician dispensability that at a time when Rome's very existence was threatened, the lower order seceded to an armed camp. Menenius Agrippa, who was sent to deal with the rebels, told the story of the members of the body that revolted against the gluttonous and idle belly, whom they had previously served. The hands carried no food to the mouth, the mouth accepted nothing that was given, the teeth refused to chew. But, in starving

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the do-nothing belly, they starved the entire body, including themselves. The story—and the agreement to appoint Tribunes of the people—had its effect.

The Roman plebs was not without legitimate grievances. The patricians of that era, although they did provide military and political leadership, had excluded plebeians from office on the basis of a racial theory. Only patricians, they insisted, had the blood of gods in their veins, and only they were entitled to discharge the sacerdotal functions of Roman magistrates. Since it would have been sacrilege to contaminate divine blood, intermarriage between patricians and plebeians was forbidden.

Race myths of this type are a common justification of political privilege, and they often reflect a history of conquest and subjugation: the Aryans in India, the Dorians in Sparta, the Normans in England, and even the Franks in France all established themselves as a master class on the backs of conquered aborigines. In each of these cases, populist revolt had some of the flavor of race war. The real Hereward the Wake and the legendary Robin Hood are expressions of Saxon *revanchisme*, and in the years leading up to the Revolution, French intellectuals "discovered" their Celtic roots—an ethnic myth that lives on in Astérix the Gaul.

A more subtle but equally powerful race myth was at work in medieval Tuscany, where Lombard knights had saddled themselves on a Romano-Etruscan population that included not just peasants in the countryside but also merchants in the towns. In Pisa, where the nobles moved into the city and joined forces with the merchants, class tensions were relatively minor compared with Florence, whose nobles remained aloof, dueling and feuding with each other and treating the commoners with contempt. The merchants, in seizing power, loaded the aristocrats with civil disabilities which further exacerbated the feuds between Guelphs and Ghibellines, and, after the Guelph triumph, between the Whites and the Blacks.

It is perhaps no accident that Florence gave birth to the first political philosopher to regard power as the basic principle of politics. The price for letting this aristocratic cat out of the bag has been the eternal reproach summed up in the term "Machiavellian"—as if the philosopher had invented tyranny and not merely explained it. Machiavelli's *Discourses on Livy* are the clearest exposition on the difficulties of maintaining a republic in the face of the disciplined ambitions of aristocrats and would-be tyrants. His *Prince* remains the most objective portrait of the man of power, a type that both Herodotus and Aristotle had previously outlined in their depictions of Greek tyrants.

After centuries of lies told about Machiavelli and his disciples (among whom we should include James Burnham and Samuel Francis), we still cannot bring ourselves to confess that most of us envy the Prince, that most of us—if we had the guts and the discipline—would gladly sacrifice friends and family to have the chance to gratify our desires. Why else do we play the lottery, if not for the remote possibility of being in the position of Bill Clinton or O.J. Simpson, the exemplary heroes of our civilization?

The tyrant as hero is the subject of a recent book, *Il tiranno e l'eroe* (Mondadori, 1996), by Carmine Catenacci, who points out that the lives of great leaders, historical as well as mythical, tend to follow a similar pattern. The Leader is usually born, sometimes out of wedlock, to a humble or undistinguished family (Sargon of Akkad, Periander of Corinth) that receives supernatural indications of the event and warnings of threats to the baby's existence (Moses, Oedipus). On coming to power, the Leader is ruthless in eliminating aristocratic rivals and indulges his sexual appetites to a degree that others regard as pathological (Gilgamesh, Heracles), often with hints of incest (Oedipus with his mother) or other deviance (Pisistratus of Athens apparently sodomized his wife to avoid having children; Periander, after his wife's death, is said to have "baked his loaves in her cold oven"). Few leaders escape the consequences of their actions, and either they or their children suffer a tragic and exemplary downfall.

When I met Catenacci in May, I asked him about parallels between Greek tyrants and the Signori of the Italian Renaissance, tough violent men like Francesco Sforza, Braccio Fortebraccio, Cesare Borgia, suggesting that even today the Italian obsession with "*la bella figura*" is a residue of the signorial style. Even though most Italians are fed up with the corruption and inefficiency of their business and political leaders, most men still act as if they wanted to be *pezzi grossi* (big shots) themselves, whether as cabinet ministers or only as *professoroni*. Catenacci went farther, pointing out that Bill Clinton is a figure out of the pages of Herodotus: a white-trash background, doubtful paternity, a political career littered with dead bodies, and a sexual pathology that Heracles might have envied. "History," concluded Catenacci, "is only the myth we choose to believe in."

A great many people do believe in Clinton, and many of them actually admire him, both for his success and for his impudence, and I cannot help observing that man learns to crawl before he walks. Faced with an arrogant leader, our first impulse is to get on our knees and lick his boots; to stand up and strike a blow requires discipline and courage. In his book, Catenacci nowhere mentions the figure to whom it should have been dedicated: Benito Mussolini, whom the Italians adored as a god, putting up with his mistress and her awful family, suffering through the blunders that brought the armed wrath of the Allies on their virtually innocent heads, and in the end, turning on the designated scapegoat and dishonoring his corpse with the same vindictive fury they once visited upon the family of Sejanus.

There is nothing new under the sun that shines on North America only a little later than it lights up Europe. Our sturdy republican citizens made a god out of Lincoln, adored the President-for-life Franklin Roosevelt, and elevated the dimwitted son of a rum-runner to the status of royalty. Whether we call him king, tyrant, Führer, Party Secretary, or President, the "modern prince," as Catenacci points out in a phrase borrowed from Gramsci, is the new political myth. His regime may have "a collective structure" or even "go by the name of . . . democracy," but the modern leader plays by very ancient rules: he eliminates or suppresses all who possess integrity or distinction, he elevates the feeblest members of society—women, children, the "disadvantaged"—and under the cover of good government or human rights he enriches himself and indulges his sexual appetites with abandon.

The time for republican independence appears to have come and gone, at least so far as great nations are concerned, and most Americans, after trying to maintain ourselves upright in the boxer's stance, have returned to a posture that is more relaxing and more natural. "Leave us alone," we say, "with our Jacuzzis and the all-modern kitchens where we cook no meals; give us digital television with a hundred cable channels and

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nothing to watch, and you can do what you like with the country."

There have been elite classes that were up to the job: clan chieftains, medieval barons, the senatorial and equestrian aristocracy that did the real work of governing Rome in its great days. But there are obvious drawbacks to an upper class that is defined by men like Periander, Cesare Borgia, or William Jefferson Clinton.

How does a people go about getting rid of a tyrant or a degenerate ruling class? Opposition to tyrants does not, for the most part, come from the people themselves but from aristocrats who envy the Leader's power and have suffered from his depredations. To succeed, the rival aristocrats must be able to pass themselves off as legitimate representatives of the popular will. Washington and Jefferson, although they were far from being "men of the people," were, nonetheless, only a higher expression of the character and qualities of Virginia farmers. If Jefferson had really been the Enlightened Francophile that Conor Cruise O'Brien has portrayed, he could never have been elected governor of Virginia, much less President of the United States. Today, the ruling elite looks down upon the people as a race of serfs and helots. This disdain is understandable in such foreign masters as Rupert Murdoch, George Soros, and Madeleine Albright, but even our native sons and daughters who come to power can barely disguise their contempt for the Middle American helots who hew their wood and draw their water. When Mrs. Clinton tells us she knows how to rear our children better than we do, half the population rises to its feet to applaud her generous condescension.

Republican Americans are groaning under the tyranny of the modern state, but they have failed to produce the leadership that can overthrow the regime. If we give up on the fictions of democracy and republican independence—as I fear we must, so long as the government can keep this continental empire in one piece—then we are going to have to do something about replacing the alienated, vulgar, self-indulgent degenerates who are not content with owning and managing the country but insist upon interfering in our private life to an extent undreamed of by ancient tyrants and emperors. Nero was popular with the masses, whom he flattered and left alone; it was only the people unlucky enough to be in his social set that he preyed upon. We, however, are all in the same boat, because in reconstructing the American republic as a democracy resting on the popular will, we have invested the "modern prince" with the ultimate power to decide questions of good and evil, life and death. If Nero was a tyrant, we may need a new word to describe the despotic democrats who rule over modern states.

In the days when the word "tyrant" first made its appearance in the ancient world, the Spartans distinguished themselves by opposing these demagogic leaders who spoke for the people. The Spartan commonwealth was, at least in its best days, a disciplined republic, whose citizens enjoyed more "democratic" privileges than any citizen body in history (with the usual caveat that citizenship did not extend to women, slaves, helots, aliens, non-Spartan *perioeci*).

Everything in the so-called Lycurgan constitution was designed to prevent the emergence of any social or political distinction which could serve as the basis of personal rule. The two kings, of different lineages, were kept in line by the *ephors*; the ostentatious display of wealth was curbed both by restrictions on money and by the requirement that adult males dine together in common messes.

More important than Sparta's sumptuary restrictions was the system of education, the *agoge*. Sparta was one of the few countries of the world, ancient or modern, that based citizenship not merely on the facts of descent, class, and wealth, but also on the compulsory training given to future citizens. A noble Spartan who did not undergo the *agoge* could not enjoy the privileges of citizenship, whereas foreigners (like Xenophon's sons) who survived the ordeal may have been eligible. Even Spartans who completed their education could lose their status for failing to live in the Spartan manner or for displaying cowardice, because the object of the *agoge* was not so much knowledge or mental agility—though a certain wit and "laconic" style was highly prized—as it was character. Xenophon, the Athenian-born mercenary and writer who went to live in Sparta, emphasizes repeatedly that the purpose of Spartan training was to inculcate both shame and obedience, and the Spartan entries in any good encyclopedia of antiquities are filled with anecdotes and proverbs illustrating the self-discipline of Spartan citizens.

Critics of Sparta have objected that once they got off the farm, Spartan leaders like Pausanias (the victor at Plataea) and Clearchus (the mercenary commander who accompanied the younger Cyrus in his bid for the Persian throne) turned into money-grubbing tyrants. The criticism is valid but not entirely fair. How many successful leaders, once they have broken free from the restrictive customs and sense of shame imposed by small-town life, succeed in holding on to their virtue? In 20th-century American history, Frank Capra's Jeff Smith comes to mind, and for real-life examples we have to turn to George Washington, John Adams, and General Lee. The Athenians had little to brag about in the character of their greatest leaders—the double-dealing con-artist Themistocles, the dictator Pericles, and that thoroughgoing scoundrel Alcibiades. The really remarkable thing is not the number of Spartans who failed to resist temptation "once they had seen Sardis," but the number who remained, like King Leonidas and his band of 300, "obedient to the commands of the Spartans" until death.

The lesson taught by the Spartans (and by the Romans of the early Republic) is that a responsible elite class can only be created by an education that forms the temper as well as the mind. As Francis Bacon put it in his essay on "Custom and Education":

> Custom is the principal magistrate of man's life. . . . most perfect when it beginneth in young years: this we call education, which is, in effect, but an early custom. . . . Certainly the great multiplication of virtues upon human nature resteth upon societies well ordained and disciplined.

Different societies have handled this problem in different ways. In Europe, the son of a knight or nobleman was frequently sent as a page to another court, where he would not be spoiled by his own family, and English boarding schools, for all their vices, gave England an elite class capable of governing an empire. The apprenticeship of young workers, apart from teaching the boys a trade and establishing family alliances, also served to avoid spoiling the boys who might grow up to be merchant princes.

Any sensible businessman who made his money the hard way is worried about what will happen to his own sons who

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grow up in luxury. One friend of ours solved the problem by allocating only enough money to set up his sons in business and left the rest to charity. Others have sent their sons to the school of hard knocks. My father, who dropped out of college to stoke coal on the Great Lakes, was working on a ship belonging to the Steinbrenner line, when a frail lad was given to him as a partner. The young man, who was obviously not up to the work, was perfectly happy to let my father stoke enough coal for both of them. At the end of the watch, one of my father's friends broke out laughing and told my father that the young man, whose work he had been doing, was the owner's son, George. Obviously, Steinbrenner *père* was already concerned about the spoiled brat who would grow up to be the scourge of professional baseball, but by then it was too late.

The American ruling class does not send its sons to sea but to colleges, where they are indulged and spoiled by their *almae matres* that pander to every vice: booze, drugs, women, men. At their common messes, the Spartans used to introduce helots and make them drunk, to show the young men how not to behave. Today, a college student could serve the same purpose. Colleges that used to have segregated dormitories and curfews for women are now bordellos, and the administrators little better than panders. They do have codes, of course, but they are all concerned with controlling speech and thought. You can shoot heroin and walk naked across campus; you can spend four years preying upon the freshmen girls, and no one will think the less of you, so long as you do not call someone a "water buffalo" or engage in "inappropriate laughter." Even silence is punishable. At some universities, it is a violation of the sensitivity code to pay no attention to a homosexual when he is making a pass: to pretend you don't know what is going on is to deny him the right to his sexual identity. Poor Mario Savio, who lived long enough to see Berkeley turned into an indoctrination camp.

It is as if our universities were designed for only one purpose: the elimination of the last vestiges of obedience and shame that have survived four years of high school. The students are treated as animals, to be herded into high-rise zoos and vast lecture halls, where they live down to expectations. The academic standards are so low that it no longer requires effort to earn the gentleman C. When I was teaching at Miami of Ohio (back in the early 1970's), I discovered that the average grade was *B* (as it was at Stanford, at the time), and when I asked how *B* came to mean average (rather than good) work, I was told that Miami students were better than the students at Ohio State. I quoted Seneca's remark that goodness does not consist in being better than the worst, thus driving another nail into the coffin in which my academic career lies buried.

In speaking at colleges and universities, I have met many fine students—intelligent, polite, normal in every way (which makes them abnormal, indeed)—and I have run into professors who were hardworking, responsible, even brilliant. But these students and teachers are a dwindling minority, even at good schools, and the average university teacher is not only incompetent to do his job—that is clear from the articles published in "learned journals"—but all too often, he is a cowardly, backbiting liar whose code of honor is that of the concentration camp collaborator who sells out his friends for an extra bowl of slop. One of my former colleagues was sent to jail when it was discovered that he had sexually molested his own son. And yet, he is not without his defenders, colleagues who believe he should be reinstated on the grounds that he posed no threat to students, since he never molested a young man who was not a member of his immediate family. I wish I were making this up.

Moderate and liberal defenders of the university will trot out the cliché that schools only reflect society. This is true, but not in the sense they mean. Most Americans are not as degenerate as college professors and administrators (indeed, there are housing projects with a higher moral tone than most universities set), but the university's lack of standards, its denial of reality, and its cult of immorality do reflect all too well the character of the American ruling class.

Colleges that used to have segregated dormitories and curfews for women are now bordellos, and the administrators little better than panders. They do have codes, of course, but they are all concerned with controlling speech and thought.

There is probably no practical measure we can take that would arrest the decline of the American character. Homeschooling protects children from some vices, but many homeschooled children are terribly spoiled, unable to endure the rigors of competition. Even homeschooling families will undoubtedly continue to pour their treasure into the sewer of higher education. We all want our children to have the good degree that means a good job. Knowingly or not, we are surrendering many, if not most of them, to the enemy.

The modern university is like the blood tribute the Turks levied on conquered Christians and Jews. Every year, millions of conservative Christians send their children to colleges where they will be taught to despise everything their parents hold dear. Among the worst are the Catholic and evangelical colleges, whose second-rate professors have just enough energy to hold on to the back of the bandwagon. The only exceptions I can think of are the tiny experimental schools like Thomas Aquinas in California, Thomas More in Texas, and Rose Hill in South Carolina.

Instead of forcing their way to the table, American reactionaries should have made some effort to displace the degenerate elite with which we are "saddled and hampered and addled." This would have meant the creation of colleges, not think tanks; the publication of books, newspapers, and magazines, not pamphlets, newsletters, and background reports. I understand the impatience of so-called patriots who think you cannot make an omelet without breaking a few eggs, but so far as the American right is concerned, no one has thought to buy a chicken or build a henhouse.

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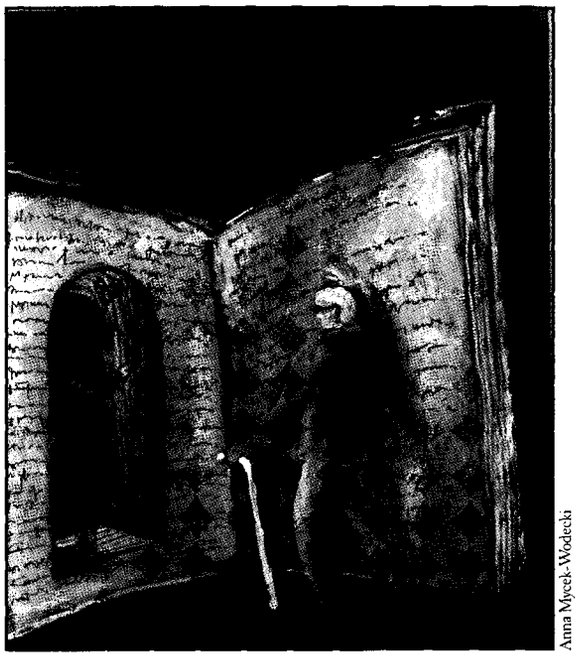
To Hell With College

by John Lukacs



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

I ask my readers not to be shocked by the title of this essay. "To Hell With Culture" was the title of my last essay published in *Chronicles*, in September 1994. Readers of it saw that I was not an enemy of culture; and now I am not an enemy of higher education. I wish merely to emphasize that the problems are wrongly stated. *Culture* is not being threatened, but *civilization* is—for many reasons, one of them being the accepted idea that culture is of a higher order than civilization. And now it is not colleges that are threatened, but intelligence and civility—for many reasons, among them the lopsided belief that these virtues are the outcome of higher education. The opposite is true: the quality of higher education depends on the respect that people have for intelligence and civility.

Allow me to begin with a long-range view. In the histories of great nations universities were seldom important. The universities of Italy had little to do with the art and the literature of the Renaissance. At the peak of the Elizabethan Age, the influences of Oxford and Cambridge were nugatory. During the 18th century, the university of France was creaking and antiquated; the influence of the Sorbonne on the French Revolution in 1789 was nil. Yet those were glorious periods in the history of those nations.

In the 19th century, there came a change—the rise of universal education, among other things. Among them were the practices, the curricula, and the structures of higher education in Germany—adopted and emulated in many places of the world, including nations that were unrelated and unfriendly to Germany. In many cases the results—the adoption of the German middle-school curriculum and of universities that trained specialists—were salutary, even though the German system of mental training was forced at the expense of what could be called character education.

The evolution of higher education in America was unique. More than 100 years ago it evolved into a compound of English and German influences and structures: the college system was inherited from the British Isles, and universities followed the German model of specialized graduate training. (In this sense, it may be argued, "multiculturalism" began not after the 1960's but at least two generations earlier.) The American college's origins were English, including its nomenclature, such as the Bachelor's and Master's degrees. The graduate schools of the universities adopted the German model, with the Ph.D. degree. Yet these, though important, were but secondary phenomena within the enormous rising tide of universal, or near-universal, education. This involved most of the nations of the Western world, too; but what was peculiarly American was the multiplication of educational institutions beyond anything comparable elsewhere. By 1880, a state such as Ohio had about 70 colleges and universities—perhaps half as many as all of the rest of the world combined. In 1955 Herbert Hoover wrote: "With only about six percent of the world's population we have almost as many youth in our institutions of higher learning as the rest of the world put together. We could probably enumerate more libraries and more printed serious work than the other 94 percent of the people of the earth." Four years before this emanation of Progressive optimism, T.S. Eliot wrote: "We

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must combat the illusion that the maladies of the modern world can be put right by a system of instruction. . . . There is also the danger that education . . . will take upon itself the reformation and direction of culture, instead of keeping to its place as one of the activities through which culture realizes itself." (That Hoover as well as Eliot are heroes of American conservatives at least suggests what is wrong with the conservative movement itself, though that is another matter.)

What then happened in the 1960's is well-known, so that I may sum it up necessarily inaccurately, and briefly. For many reasons (one of them being the national reaction to Sputnik, another being the glorified image of the Kennedy era) higher education experienced a financial Golden Age in the early 60's, whereby the academic profession attracted hordes of people for whom an academic career would have had few or no attractions before. Except for the professorate in the most elite of universities, a college professorship was not very well paying before the 1950's; consequently, a professor's job was not highly esteemed among the population at large. Now all this changed, and together with that came the change in the ideological climate and the civilizational breakdown of the 60's, to which most of the new professors were not immune, to say the least. According with the habit of intellectuals not only to represent but to incarnate current ideas, this led to a novel professorial behavior, together with the predominance of antinomian, neo-Marxist, neo-Freudian, neo-modern, neo-feminist, etc., etc., teachings and ideas still prevalent in our institutions of higher learning 30 years later, since most of these people remain comfortably situated in our universities.

But it would be mistaken to attribute the troubles of American higher education principally to this ideological element. The principal factor was, again, the tremendous inflation, submerging everything: inflation of students, of course, but also of grades and degrees. By 1980, in a state such as Pennsylvania, nearly one-half of high school students were going on to college. When there is more and more of something it is worth less and less, which is the main problem of democracy, whether the focus be the value of the currency or the worth of a college education. But beneath this overwhelming condition something more disturbing was happening. Thirty or 40 years ago the majority of American college and university students were of the first generation: their parents had not had the chance of a college education. During the last quarter-century most of these students were the sons and daughters of parents of whom at least one had a college degree. But the general experience shows that most of these students were (and are) educated worse than their predecessors. Yet their grades are higher: in 1980, an astonishing majority (over 70 percent) of undergraduates in our leading colleges had grades such as A, A-, B+, *perhaps B*. And this brings me to my main point, that the principal—and perhaps insoluble—problem of American higher education is not ideological or intellectual but social and, yes, moral.

During the 19th century, the ideal of the English public school was the education of character-*cum*-intelligence, with the emphasis on the former. In the university colleges the emphasis shifted to intelligence, but of course not at the expense of character. But what is "character"? A difficult question, further obscured by the still current Freudian emphasis on the subconscious, and on the motives of men and women. Let me only say that character is directed to purposes, rather than being dependent on motives: to conscious behavior and to the conscious functions of the mind. This was (and not only in England) hardly separable from the ideal of the gentleman—a social category, of course, but not merely definable within the limits of a class. For gradually the meaning of "gentle" became inseparable not only from birth but from behavior and, yes, thinking. Beginning at least 250 years ago, a "gentleman" had to embody a recognizable amount of civility and also some learning. (That this ideal was something very different from the notion of an Intellectual—a word that, as a noun, began to appear in Britain and America only about 100 years ago, with its provenance from Russia—needs no further explanation.)

There were some differences between the contemporary English and the Jeffersonian ideals of a cultivated man. But, essentially, the ideals of the English and of the better American private schools and colleges were not very different. They suggested higher standards of civility, including behavior. (I recall the sign of an American eatery on Madison Avenue in New York around 1950: "A Hamburger With A College Education.") Before the recent emergence of a meritocracy in America, the main purpose of parents sending their sons and daughters to elite colleges and universities was social, rather than intellectual. That social emphasis was less so in the Yale or Harvard of the early 19th century, but it then reached its peak during the—in retrospect, short-lived—bourgeois period in the history of the United States, approximately from about 1880 to 1955. But there was a worm in the apple. There were—and still are—good reasons for sending a boy to Princeton, perhaps principally for the sake of learning good manners (after all, as Goethe said, there are no manners that do not have a moral foundation somewhere). But the acquisition of good manners was seldom separable from the ambition to fit into good company—that is, a preparation for the rise on the social, even more than on the occupational, scale. The result was an often excessively cramped social consciousness. That Bohemian rebel and traditionalist Dwight MacDonald (a Yale man) recalled that, working at the *New Yorker*, he was endlessly harassed by John O'Hara who wanted to know the smallest details about clubs and colleges and the width of neckties and belts worn by their members—and not for the sake of gathering such details for his novels, either.

Let us not have illusions about the climate of our most famous institutions in the past. Santayana summed it up in his *Character and Opinion in the United States*; in a different way, so did Henry Seidel Canby in his memoirs, entitled *Alma Mater*: "Many of the traits that had made the twentieth-century American in business and the professions . . . are really traits of the alumni of the old American colleges. . . . This stabilizing of character and temperament, and also of prejudice, [was] probably due to the college graduate, for our alumni strengthened their bonds and gained in class consciousness just when the so-called old American was losing his grip." As early as 1894, Santayana wrote about Harvard: "A gentleman had begun to be an anomaly. . . . Some teachers of the old school naturally remain—teachers in whom the moral and personal relation to their pupils is still predominant, but the main concern of our typical young professor is not his pupils at all. . . . His vocation is to follow and promote the development of his branch of learning by reading the new books and magazine articles on his subject and contributing himself to its 'literature.'" And Canby, reminiscing in 1934 about the same period: "We lived

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in a cautious society and caution bred timidity. . . . That is why there was so much that was feminine in academic life, so much jealousy, so much vanity, so much petty intrigue. The faculty seethed with gossip. Some of our best professors were so vain that it was impossible to argue with them over any opinion they had made their own." Not entirely different 100 years later, is it?

There are a few salutary phenomena. For the last 20 years at least it appears that some of the best college and university students are not more "liberal" but more "conservative." Also, some of the best scholars, especially in the humanities, may now be found in small and generally unreputed colleges and universities. Fifty years ago it was rare to find a first-rate man in Kansas or Arkansas—this is no longer so today. There is also a slow, but perhaps significant, seepage of conservative and neoconservative scholars into higher academic positions, sometimes even in the so-called elite universities. Do not, however, take too much comfort from this latter phenomenon. A tendency to ideologization, to professional and personal intrigues, to jealousy and exclusion, is as frequent among newfangled conservatives as among the most ossified old liberals. "Knowledge without integrity," Samuel Johnson wrote in *Rasselas*, "is a dreadful thing."

The greatest, and most enduring, American myth has been Education—ever since Emerson and perhaps even since Cotton Mather—often at the expense of the task of bringing up civilized children at home. In the 19th century, the most imposing building in an American small town was a bank. In the 20th century, it was the public high school, where parents expected their offspring to learn how to drive and dance and learn the rudiments of sexual contacts—*in loco parentis*. (This may now be a thing of the past, since so many of our public schools fulfill not much more than the function of custodial institutions.) But *in loco parentis* now involves every educational institution in America, from pre-kindergarten to graduate schools. Education for learning—and, alas, often education of civilized behavior—is cultivated in fewer and fewer homes. Most of the problems of American higher education are not only inseparable from the problems of the dissolution of traditional family and home life; they are the direct consequences of it.

The problem of higher education in America is the problem of the degradation of democracy. The founders of this Republic (such as Jefferson) may have proceeded from an overestimation of the intelligence—including the learning capacity—of the people. But expectation is always preferable to distrust, as even gullibility may be preferable to cynicism. What has been happening in our "culture"—entertainment, television, indeed in all of our educational institutions—is a cynical underestimation of the intelligence, indeed of the learning capacity, of our young people. The results are all around us. Just look at the names of the courses offered at some of our elite institutions. This is not the place to illustrate, let alone list, the myriad imbecilities practiced, taught, and institutionalized in some of these institutions during the last 30 years. Yet the prestige of our elite institutions has not suffered much in spite of this. As a matter of fact, the sons of the best (and not only the richest) people of the world send their sons to study at Harvard or MIT or Stanford: the sons of sheiks as well as those of European prime ministers or of East Asian millionaires. There is a lesson in this somewhere—perhaps the one put starkly in one of La Rochefoucauld's *Maxims*, that the world awards the appearance of merit, not merit itself. But this is a perennial human condition, not a particularly American one.

At the same time, fewer and fewer rich or ambitious foreigners now send their offspring to American colleges. For the function of the American college changed even more drastically than that of our graduate schools of specialized training. The American college must now do—at best—what the American high school was supposed to do two or three generations ago. At best: because the results are not encouraging. At the end of this chronological century the average college graduate—consider that his parents are pushing him into schools earlier and earlier, so that this happens after 17 or 18 years of schooling—shows little adequate ability to read and write. In any case, the college has become nothing more than extended middle school, or private school at most; and the college degree amounts to what a high school diploma was worth 40 or 50 years ago. The effects of all this spread beyond what is or what is not in the college curricula. They are social. College Joe, Betty Co-Ed, and the Sweetheart of Sigma Chi are now period pictures. "A Hamburger With A College Education" today would suggest a hamburger that is not more but less meaty—and tasty—than other hamburgers: perhaps one with reduced cholesterol, or surely with salsa.

There are now hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of high school graduates who never had to read a book. There are now such college graduates, too. Of course the respect for books and reading and learning must come from elsewhere, as it has always: from the home—or, in these atomized and suburbanized and dispersed habitations—from the *desire* for a home and for a family. So is the habit of reading and learning inseparable from the *desire* for reading and learning. Let me repeat: the problem of American higher education is not ideological or intellectual. It is social and moral.

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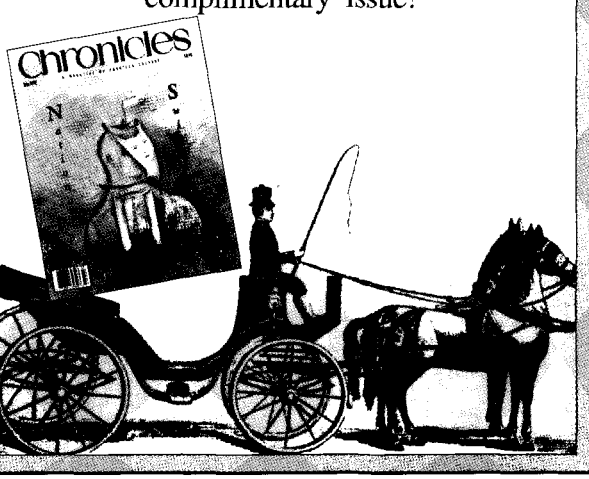

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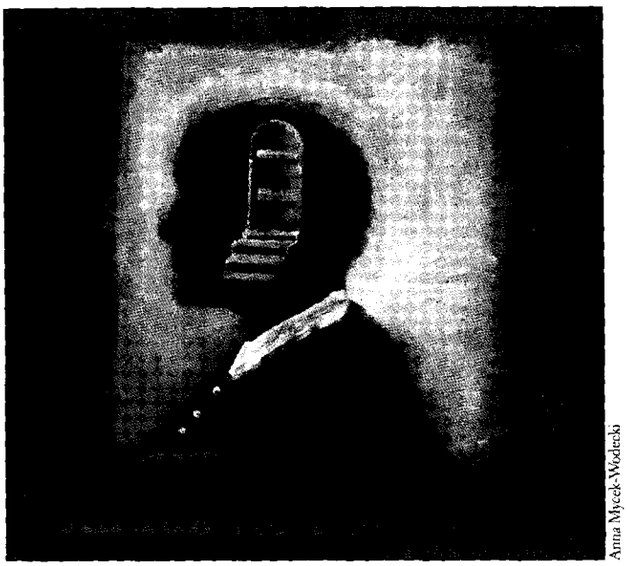
In Praise of Elites

by George Watson



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Being a lifelong elitist myself, I have long had a sneaking sympathy for a Trollope character, Sir Timothy Beeswax. In *The Duke's Children* (1880), Beeswax is a dignified old politician who lives not for power but, quite unashamedly, for the trappings of office. Parliament, he believed, was a club so eligible that any Englishman would want to belong to it; it was "the cream of the land." To be in the cabinet was still creamier; and as for the prime minister himself, who could create dukes and appoint bishops, he had achieved "an Elysium of creaminess not to be found in any other position on the earth's surface."

The portrait is satirical, but we all have some Beeswax in us. Everybody, or nearly everybody, wants to join an elite and enjoy the cream. Once such simple needs as food and shelter are satisfied, status is the next thing to want, and it is hard to live without wanting something. When John F. Kennedy was assassinated, a friend was asked why Kennedy had wanted to be President at all, and the answer was, "He had money and women already—what else is there?" John Pierpont Morgan, when he and his friends were refused admission in the 1890's to New York clubs, raised the principle of an open elite to its ultimate and majestic conclusion by founding one for himself. If you can't join them, lick them. And so on down the scale. In the armed services men fight harder, any commander will tell you, for medals; in public life they work and scheme for honors and titles. To that extent an honors system is not merely decorative. It works. In fact, for those who already have enough money, or more than enough, it works in the supreme sense that nothing else does. So if public service is to be maintained and advanced, there is a plain case for elite-systems like clubs and academies, along with titles, medals, and prizes. There may even be a case for inventing more of them.

It is still commonplace to be told that elitism is wrong, for all that, and those who think we need it, and need more of it, seldom argue the case. It is easy to forget how recent all this is. *Elitism* and *elitist* are new words in English, adopted as late as the 1950's, so there are plenty of people who can remember when they did not exist at all. Elitist is first recorded as used by David Riesman in an article in *Psychiatry* in 1950, referring to the ideas of Freud, Nietzsche, and Carlyle. His use was perhaps only mildly disparaging; but by the 1960's, there were few worse things you could say, and by now it is only necessary to call a view or an institution elitist to declare war on it. It is rare to call yourself an elitist, rarer still to be proud of it. So though many people—perhaps most people—long to join an elite, they are forbidden to say so, in a new and tyrannical system of hypocrisy more pervasive than the Victorian taboo on sex.

I call anti-elitism hypocritical on the evidence of daily observation. Have you ever known a declared anti-elitist decline to enter an elite when the chance came? You are supposed to say you want no cream, but you are not expected to refuse it when it comes. In academic life, I have often noticed that the left seeks promotion and honors as assiduously as anyone else. It is a rich source of jokes. The late Sir Herbert Read, the art critic who held anarchist views, was known in his last years as the anarchist knight.

And so in public life. The status of politicians, we are often told in an age of lurid press revelations, has never been so low. But bring a member of Congress or Parliament to a social gathering and see for yourself how reluctant people are to meet politicians. They cluster round. Social snobbery is not much different. The last time I heard an American claim that the United States has less snobbery than Europe was shortly after he had assured me that his neighbor in Washington, D.C., was a Supreme Court judge. Anti-elitism, in short, is a mode of mock-modesty and a technique of concealed boasting. It would be boasting to say you know monarchs, presidents, and Supreme Court judges. So the way out is to imply that you have met them and don't much care. A likely winner in the

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mock-modesty stakes was a professor in Victorian Oxford who once casually remarked, "Quite the *nicest* emperor I know is Germany."

Perhaps, at long last, someone should give thought to the highly antifactual question of what it would be like to live without elites. It would be a more ignorant world, presumably, and perhaps dangerously so. Elites are highly self-educative, after all. Bankers, it is said, lunch with bankers, and on the natural assumption that they talk about money, the money market could only be more ignorantly conducted if they did not lunch. Country clubs, similarly, spread gossip, and gossip is a sort of knowledge, sometimes an indispensable sort. Universities do too, and whenever I teach in the United States, there is a departmental lunch where business and gossip are talked. The beginner has to tread carefully here. Years ago, in a Midwestern university, I blundered into a daily lunch for professors of American literature. They were entirely welcoming to a newcomer from England, and my innocent mistake taught me a good deal about American literature and how it is studied. But it *was* a mistake, and after a week or two I corrected it and moved to a table where Shakespeare and Dickens were the conversational fare, not to mention the personal shortcomings of the department chairman. Plainly I was lucky. Worse things can happen. There is a harrowing story about someone attending an academic conference in Chicago who found himself frozen out of a circle entirely composed of experts on the Cantos of Ezra Pound. No doubt elitism can go too far. No doubt an expert on the cantos should sometimes talk to people who have never read them. No doubt, for that matter, he should talk to strangers on the bus. In fact, it is only by talking to people outside your elite, which may be as modest as an academic department or as grand as the Supreme Court, that you realize how fortunate you are to belong to an elite at all.

But suppose the rich did choose to be selfish and to spend only on themselves and their families. How harmful, in sober truth, is a rich and selfish elite?

There are some assumptions too lightly made here. One is that elites are necessarily cozy and protective. In fact, they can easily be internecine, and a world without them would in all likelihood be a flabby and uncritical world. A banker learns what he does wrong, among other things, when he lunches with his colleagues. Professors, too, are not slow to cavil. All the 40 members of the French Academy that Richelieu founded in 1635 have had to wait to get in until somebody died, in a classic instance of a self-perpetuating elite, and were probably voted down at their first attempts; so that the whole experience of becoming an academician can be depended on to wear you down and hone you up. Elites are not in their nature complacent; and if, by some unimaginable act of policy, their competitive edge were removed, whether in clubs, academies, or the higher professions, it is not just snobbery that would diminish but effort too. That would have its cost. Money would be worth less, teaching would decline, the justice of courts would probably grow more inept and less pure. If status mattered less, wealth would come to matter more. I wonder if anti-elitists have contemplated these probabilities and what they would cost in terms of justice and creativity. Money, to be sure, in the world there is, can buy entry into an elite. But perhaps that is one of the best ways to spend it.

It is curious that, with so much evidence to the contrary, it is still widely assumed that the desire to be rich is never anything more nor less than a vulgar greed for material things. Europeans are perhaps easier victims of this illusion than Americans, whose history has trained them to admire the parvenu and to understand what, as an outsider, I venture to call the Great American Truth: that it is more honorable to create wealth than to inherit it. American private wealth is often newer than European, its economic dynasties of shorter lineage, and their sheer newness, as the television soap called *Dynasty* used to prove nightly, understandably a source of fascination, of an envy unmarked by rejection. New wealth in Europe, by contrast, is still sullied by the taint of vulgarity. Perhaps its ultimate symbol was the luxury yacht from which Robert Maxwell drowned a few years ago. Maxwell was a refugee from Czechoslovakia, as it was then called. He arrived in England as a penniless teenager in 1939, made millions after the war, and was briefly a member of the House of Commons; so his career illustrates the fundamental principle of the open elite and how to break into it. His social manners and business ethics did not endear him, it must be said, to the nation he chose to make his own, even though he gave widely to charity. No one would accuse the late Captain Maxwell of having become rich in order to be charitable. But he was, and there are those who get rich, among other reasons, in order to give it away. Odd, in the rich nations of the West that owe so much to private munificence, that the possibility is so little regarded. In 1923, for example, John Pierpont Morgan, Jr., handed over a great library in New York with its art treasures to a trust, and his portrait hangs there on the wall wearing the gown of an honorary Cambridge doctorate. So, like many a banker, he belonged to more elites than one, and was proud of it.

But suppose the rich did choose to be selfish and to spend only on themselves and their families. How harmful, in sober truth, is a rich and selfish elite? Their lawful enterprises may be presumed to have profited the economy as a whole. They pay taxes that fund welfare. They give employment; and if they collect works of art, they hinder their dispersal or destruction. Rich collectors, it is said, are egotists who seek their own aggrandizement. Long may they do so. It is because they seek it that our public collections are what they are. To enter the Frick Museum in Manhattan is to praise the name of Henry Clay Frick. Pierpont Morgan, as every visitor to 36th Street must know, did not waste his substance. Tax not the royal saint with vain expense, as Wordsworth once wrote, contemplating what King Henry VI had achieved in glass and stone at King's College chapel in Cambridge. If this is how elites behave, if this is what comes of liking cream, perhaps elitism is something more than inevitable. It is a blessing.

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The Education of Everyman

The Meaning of the *Odyssey*

by William F. Wyatt

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Classical professors looked forward with a mixture of eagerness and anxiety to the recent $40 million version of the *Odyssey* on NBC. Would the production reveal Homer, or would the Hollywoodification of his poem so distort the plot that we would be spending the remainder of our careers disabusing students and others of false impressions? And would the audience even be sufficiently interested by the story to consult the original?

I am no critic of television, and cannot answer this last question. There are liberties taken with Homer's story, and matters related by Homer outside the poem are brought into the production. The Cyclops Polyphemus was horrible, but perhaps not horrible enough; Circe was enchanting, but perhaps not enchanting enough; Kalypso was sexy and seductive, but perhaps not sufficiently so—the conception at these points was that of an R-rated film, but the execution was that of a show to be aired on network television. There were many good things, of course. Aeolus was innovative and good, remarking that Odysseus, unlike most mortals, was able to learn from experience, something of which Homer would have approved. From Odysseus himself we learn that he is proud and arrogant, and that Poseidon is angry with him for his self-sufficiency and inadequate gratitude to the gods for destroying Troy: here Homer would have demurred. These are the only two characteristics we can assign to Odysseus, save his—intermittent but implacable—desire to return to Penelope.

Penelope in turn is faithful to the memory of her husband, and her young son Telemachus is eager to become a man and emulate his long-absent father. Both have to contend with a bunch of unruly suitors who want Odysseus' property and his wife, even if they have to kill the boy to get these prizes. The end result of the television version—though not of the Homeric—is that after Telemachus and Odysseus have taken revenge on the suitors, Penelope satisfactorily and romantically falls into Odysseus' arms. The television *Odyssey* is an adventure tale with a romantic ending, and an enjoyable one.

What, then, of Homer's *Odyssey*? What is it really about? What themes does it contain that are deserving of our attention? Before answering that question we must refer to the *Iliad*, the other great ancient Greek epic. For the *Odyssey* presupposes the *Iliad*, follows it, and in a very real sense completes it. Odysseus is the last warrior back from Troy, and it is his return that signals the end of the Trojan adventure. The first question the *Odyssey* answers, then, is: When did the Trojan adventure end? Answer: when Odysseus finally took up his rightful position as chief man on Ithaca.

The *Iliad* is a poem of war and heroic endeavor. The main characters are mighty warriors, bloodthirsty, successful in their work, rich as a result of the booty they acquire. Their lives—in many instances short—are devoted to heroic (i.e., warlike) activities, and their primary concern is with honor, not survival. Honor is attained by battle, and brings respect among one's friends, fear in the enemy, and riches with which to reward one's followers and support one's self. Life is apt to be short, but it can be glorious.

Achilles sums up the heroic life in the *Iliad* when he reports

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his mother Thetis' prophecy that he would live either a short and glorious life or a long and inglorious one. He is unable to imagine a long life of honor and respect, nor can he look forward to renown after his death as a consolation. His problem at Troy was that his comrades, and this means of course the expedition's chief, Agamemnon, did not accord him the respect his pride demanded: they did not fulfill their part of the heroic bargain. And it was this failure that caused Achilles to query the validity of all his heroic assumptions.

Achilles was alone in this questioning. The other heroes, Odysseus among them, continued to assume the correctness of the heroic ethos and continued cracking heads. Homer does not reveal in the *Iliad* the final outcome of the war, nor does he tell us in that poem what happened to his heroes after the war was over. And yet the return of war-hardened heroes must have been a serious problem then as now. How could a hero, one who for ten years has been earning honor and riches through battle, adjust to a peacetime existence? We get hints at the answer to this question in Homer's description of the shield of Achilles in *Iliad* XVIII, where marriages and harvests take place. Even there, though, contention is rife, but it is mediated and moderated by civic custom overseen by elders and judges. Greek life back home was nearly as contentious as was war on the battlefield, but violence was by and large contained: peace, though, does not automatically denote domestic tranquillity.

The problem of readjustment to a peacetime life must have been difficult, or, in the case of Sophocles' *Ajax*, impossible. Homer's *Odyssey* in its pre-Hollywood existence set about to answer questions of readjustment to a warless world. Odysseus is one of the great heroes of the *Iliad*, leader of a contingent of men. After the destruction of Troy he sets out for home with his men, all of whom he loses before finally reaching home alone and on another's ship. His first adventure after the destruction of Troy is with the Cicones—omitted in the television version—whom he defeats in war, thus continuing his warlike, raiding ways. He is still in military mode. One of the temptations he must overcome before reaching home is the temptation to engage in piratical and military raids.

The remainder of his journey back contains those episodes most beloved of Hollywood, and the episodes we all remember from childhood. We recall the Lotus Eaters, in the television version combined cleverly with Circe; the Cyclops, Circe, Sirens, etc., though we may forget Aeolus and the Laestrygonians, and not be much interested in the scene on Phaeacia—though we cannot forget Nausicaa, as the television version did. After triumphing over all these enemies and temptations—and only about halfway through the poem—Odysseus lands on Ithaca and can begin the second part of his quest, that of reintegrating himself into local society as husband of Penelope and leader of the Ithacans.

Odysseus has survived, but for what? Questions arise concerning his welcome at home, his motivation to return to Penelope, and her desire—or the lack thereof—to be reunited with the man she last saw some 20 years earlier. His final test is the test both of his will to assume his earlier responsibilities with Penelope and of Penelope's willingness to have him back.

One of the most gripping of Odysseus' adventures is his visit to the underworld—suggested by Circe—where he is to meet Teiresias, a seer who can predict the future. From Teiresias he learns that it is his destiny (a) to return to Ithaca to wife and home, and (b) ultimately to die. Death is not to be in war, the Iliadic mode, but a peaceful one. He must accommodate himself to a peaceful life. It has been observed that Teiresias' advice is not really very helpful in detailing how Odysseus is to reach Ithaca, and does not provide the kinds of information Circe's remarks earlier had led us to expect. In fact it is only with Circe in the next book that Odysseus learns of the next horrors and adventures. That is to miss the point. Odysseus learns in the underworld his ultimate destiny, the destiny that awaits us all. He must first accommodate himself to a peaceful life. The television version was excellent in its depiction of the underworld, but defective in that it did not contain these aspects of Teiresias' prophecy, the main point of Odysseus' journey. One visits the land of the dead in order to learn about living, a theme that goes back at least to the epic of Gilgamesh in the Near East.

Teiresias' advice is delivered to Odysseus, but is advice that is meant for all men: we are all at some point at least to give up a life of adventure and live a domestic life, and by so doing we can hope to have a peaceful end. Odysseus is Everyman, and Teiresias' advice and predictions concern the lot in life of every man. Teiresias' advice, therefore, is important; though it may be defective in detail for Odysseus, it does tell us the meaning of life, albeit perhaps in attenuated form. Any trip to the underworld should tell us something of the nature of our being, and Teiresias does just that.

Odysseus must settle down to an adult life of domesticity. No more adventures, no more sexual escapades, no more honor won in war. He must face up to the fact that in the Greek world, however attractive the heroic life might be to the young, at a certain point one must grow up, marry, settle down, produce heirs, and reenter civic society. So the *Odyssey* contains as well a sort of metaphorical growing up for Odysseus, a growing up we glimpse at times when Homer introduces stories from his childhood. In other words, the *Odyssey* is a sort of *Bildungsroman* in which the hero, already, to be sure, mature and an adult, learns the responsibilities of adulthood and maturity. He cannot be considered truly a man until he shoulders these responsibilities, responsibilities which in his case also entail managing an estate and governing a civic entity.

It was altogether too easy for the young Greek warrior to forget that a man's role is to beget, to support family and children, and not ceaselessly to be led on by the siren song of adventure, fame, success. There are temptations along the way and they must be overcome. Odysseus' crew could not conquer their gluttony and animal desires and hence died; Odysseus survived. He survived also the temptation of an immortality of ease and sex with the beautiful goddess Kalypso, the "concealer"; he survived the lure of limitless knowledge with the Sirens; he survived the life of sybaritic ease with the Lotus Eaters and the untroubled existence of the Phaeacians. He, the "man of many wiles," also had to overcome his own tendencies to cleverness and risk-taking, tendencies that almost resulted in his being eaten by the Cyclops—though it was in fact his cleverness that enabled him to escape that ogre. Survival, not heroic derring-do, is man's lot, and man must learn from experience.

Odysseus was at various times tempted by an easy life lived in oblivion, but like a good Greek opted for a difficult life that offered the opportunity of immortal fame among men. Survival is necessary, yes, but it does not bring fame and cannot confer immortality. This is the message of Odysseus' adventures, those fabulous and exotic tales that we all remember: it is his task—and ours—to resist, to strive, to aim at fame; and above

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all to return home, where our true life is to be found, our true fame. Troy is wonderful, but it is a young man's adventure and not the place for a mature head of family.

Kalypso had offered him immortality combined with agelessness: he could stay with her, forever young and forever vigorous, enjoying the male fantasy of continuous sex with a beautiful woman. There would, however, have been no issue from this coupling, and Odysseus would have remained in oblivion, a cipher in world history. The young, as we know, are immortal; death does not affect them, and it is only when they grow a bit older that they realize their mortality. The unmarried male in Greece, then as until recently at least, did not believe that death has any relation to him until he marries and becomes involved in the cycle of birth, maturity, death. Till then these things affect him not at all. So with Odysseus, as a warrior at Troy and with Kalypso death was an irrelevance: he was immortal. In the underworld he learned that he was not.

Upon his return to Ithaca Odysseus, now wiser about himself and about his motives, confronted an unknown situation: he did not know how the people would welcome him back; and more importantly, he did not know the mind of his wife, Penelope. Was she to be like Agamemnon's wife Clytaemnestra, who slew her husband, in league with her lover Aegisthus? Or was she—as Odysseus had been repeatedly told—still faithful and longing for him? Another question—unasked—by Homer is: Would Penelope welcome the now 20-years-older Odysseus? Odysseus himself seems convinced that he wants Penelope, but that is not enough. He wants not only her but his property, his standing, his son, and his father. He does not upon landing know whether he can count on any one of these people. He faces massive uncertainty and great odds when he lands on his home isle.

He does know that there are suitors in his halls who want to marry Penelope, to take over the rule in Ithaca, and to divide up the property that should properly go to Telemachus. These suitors are behaving—by Greek standards—in a monstrous way, eating at another's expense, maltreating beggars, and in general behaving irresponsibly. They are totally hostile to Odysseus, whom they think dead; and to Telemachus, whom they plot to kill. Odysseus can be absolutely certain that he faces at least 108 enemies when he endeavors to reassert his kingly prerogatives. We, in turn, can be certain that the suitors must die for their offenses against the house of Odysseus and the laws of hospitality.

Struggle, disguise, and degradation await Odysseus in his own home. He first visits a swineherd, the lowest of his former slaves, and disguises himself so that it is as a beggar that he enters the house he had ruled in earlier days. Prior to his entering his house he meets up with his son Telemachus, reveals to him that he is his long-lost father Odysseus at last returned, and plans with him how things are to be handled in town. Once in his own home he has an opportunity to observe the suitors, make military preparations for their death, and to test his wife's disposition. He is satisfied that she is in fact faithful to him and that she can count on him. He thus is prepared to kill the suitors and then ready to be reunited with Penelope.

At this point Homer pulls a switch on us. Odysseus kills the suitors all right, but instead of falling immediately into his arms Penelope is dubious whether this is really Odysseus she sees before her. Not that she does not really believe it is he, but she is perhaps afraid that he may not be the same Odysseus whom she loved many years earlier. Her trick with the bed convinces her that this is Odysseus and that he wants her. They can then go to bed and spend the night together, their first night together in some 20 years.

It is at this point that Hollywood ends the *Odyssey*, and some scholars in antiquity may—the matter is disputed—have ended the poem here. Homer, though, knew better. Odysseus was not yet home and master of his property until he had made peace with the relatives of the suitors and had completed his return to family by means of a meeting with his aged father, Laertes. Once he—together with Laertes and Telemachus—have faced down the suitors' relatives, Odysseus can be truly said to be home and through with his adventuring, and the Trojan War can be said finally to be at an end. Laertes and this episode were omitted from the television *Odyssey*.

The first four books of the poem—the so-called "Telemachy," which is sometimes (and incorrectly) thought not to be part of Homer's original version of his poem—display Odysseus' young son beginning to grow up and for the first time endeavoring to take charge of his own household: the Hollywood version well introduces this theme. Telemachus knows that the suitors are vile and must be punished, but he is too young to do anything about it. He finally undertakes two adult activities on his own behalf: he calls an assembly to announce to the Ithacans that the suitors should be sent away; and he undertakes, against all expectation, a trip in quest of knowledge of his father's whereabouts. These books, then, describe the maturing of a young man and his beginning to undertake manly activities.

The remaining books describe the maturing of a grown man, the maturing of the grown Odysseus, who has to learn two things: that adventuring is not the role of the adult male, and that one's proper life is with family, house, and polity. These things he learns both through his adventures and through his humiliation and triumph in his palace on Ithaca. He learns that man's lot is, while young, to garner goods and property, but then later to govern the household thus acquired with his wife and family. There comes, however, a time when even these duties and pleasures must be forsworn, and the older man—in the *Odyssey* represented by Laertes—must yield place to the younger and prepare himself to die.

The *Odyssey* thus contains *in nuce* the stages of male existence. Telemachus represents youth becoming man; Odysseus represents adult man learning maturity and responsibility; Laertes represents the old man who must step aside for his son. All is there. Each one in the poem puts aside a stage of life and moves into another. Laertes gives up the familial and political life, assertive activities, in favor of his son; Odysseus forswears the soldier's life, the life of youthful adventure; and Telemachus puts aside childhood, presumably for the heroic life of war and travel. The problems of these men thus differ. The story of the course of a Greek man's life is there in the *Odyssey*. The central problem, however, remains that of reintroducing a hero to life without warfare, without acclaim, without booty.

Homer did not omit the women. Their role also is adumbrated in the *Odyssey*, though without the detail of Odysseus' adventures and in part in a negative way. They tend to be characterized as sly seductresses, obstacles to the male's fulfillment of his familial role. Nausicaa and Penelope and Anticlea, Odysseus' mother, however, provide positive female roles—Nausicaa that of the expectant bride, Penelope that of the faithful wife, Anticlea that of the long-suffering mother. One

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notes in the case of Penelope that the life course of a married woman then as now in Greece was marriage, childbearing, and childrearing combined with abandonment if not desertion by her husband. Her reward was twofold: the proper development to adulthood of her son, and the (hoped for) return of her husband. An uncertain life, and Penelope was wise to query Odysseus on his return, not only as to whether he was Odysseus, but also whether he was still her husband and not merely the adventurer who had set sail for Troy some 20 years before.

For 20 years Penelope was in love with the idea of Odysseus, and when forced to choose a husband from among the suitors, wanted to choose that one who most resembled Odysseus. Hence it was that she proposed the contest of the bow: whoever could string Odysseus' bow and shoot an arrow through 12 axe handles would be her husband. That man would be Odysseus-like, his equal, and hence worthy of her hand and bed. When the beggar strung the bow and shot the arrow through the axes—and subsequently killed the suitors—she knew that she had found Odysseus' equal. She did not, however, yet know that he was Odysseus himself. In order to determine this she contrived to trick the trickster Odysseus by proposing that their bed be moved from its room into another place. Odysseus was horrified, knowing that one of the posts of their bed had been an olive tree—his protectress Athena's tree and forever green—and that the bed should therefore not have been movable. When he protested, Penelope finally knew that it was he and they could then go to that bed. The television version made Penelope something of a loyal wimp rather than an active player in the drama of reconciliation.

The *Odyssey*'s world was primarily a man's world, and the adventures are primarily male adventures. They are, however, played out against scenes of domesticity (involving women), and thus indicate that it is the domestic life and the life of the community that should provide the center of a man's adult existence. The *Odyssey* looks backward toward war and forward to a peaceful life. In later Greece the epic's predictions were fulfilled in that classical warfare became a civic rather than a heroic activity, engaged in by citizen soldiers and not by freebooting entrepreneurs answerable only to themselves. These classical soldiers returned to wives and children every year. The *Odyssey*, poised between war and peace, is poised also between the heroic world of epic and the domestic world of the later Greek city-state.

I fear I have made out the *Odyssey* to be a kind of domestic tract, a geometric period precursor of Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*. Clearly it is more than that. I have outlined above the societal meaning and relevance of the poem to a contemporary audience, a meaning that is confused though perhaps latent in the television version. But the *Odyssey* is a work of literary art full of adventure, excitement, suspense, thrills, and fears; and, above all, of marvelous poetry. The description of Kalypso's cave is magnificent, as are many passages in the later portions of the poem. Homer's characters are real, his tales gripping, his writing brilliant. This last and the leisurely pace at which he develops his story are inevitably lacking from the modern television version. Homer would not have objected to a television or movie version of his story, but he would have insisted that his vision of the story be honored, and that it end with Odysseus' final integration into Ithacan society.

These issues were of importance to the Greek world, and may not be of such great importance to Hollywood producers. Nonetheless, attention to them, particularly to the social context of the *Odyssey*, would, I think, have added a dimension to the presentation and rescued it from some of the incoherence that I, at least, felt when viewing it. The answer ultimately is to read the poem.

Sphinx

by Jared Carter

It lives on, and with each new day, asks
the old questions, of strangers passing by,
or even of itself. Often I have heard it
calling across the wastes, like a hot wind
that brings no relief, that sorts through
acres of sand, dust, shards, broken stones,
finding nothing. Out of Egypt it came,
aeons ago, to stand at the crossroads
while travelers, in the distance, approach.
Oedipus spoke with it, though that exchange
is lost, and all manner of false stories
sprung up in later years. Of all myths,
all tales, it is the most ancient and dim,
the most elemental. Each time it appears,
like some presence that casts no shadow,
it is the wayfarer whose life has changed,
not the Sphinx, which is outside history,
and uncaring, like the oldest of sybils.
Each time you hear its muttered questions
they strike you in a different way, though
whether one goes on four legs, or two,
or three, is of little consequence now.
Rather, you must continue along the path
through rocky places, over drifted sands,
past steep ascents leading to the mountains.
The wind throws up veils of dust and pollen.
The Sphinx at such moments walks beside you,
neither leading nor following, asking
or answering. It has sojourned here before,
and watches to see which way you will turn.

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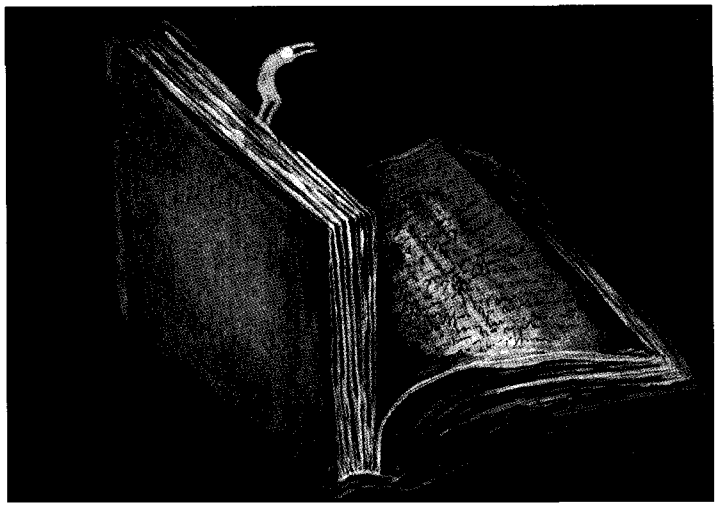
Popular Front U.

by J.O. Tate



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

How well I remember, 40 years ago, prowling in the stacks of a college library and reading the books, observing museum pieces in the halls of that library, and attending concerts in the auditorium next door. Glenn Gould showed up to play the *Goldberg Variations*, Jerome Hines to sing, and Wolfgang Schneiderhan to play Vivaldi on his violin. In those days, a college campus seemed the place to be.

I have never left the campus, though the locale has changed more than once. But nowadays, when I want to hear Glenn Gould play the *Goldberg Variations* (his first recording of 1955 of course, not his later, latest, and last), I listen at home, and not only because Glenn Gould quit touring and left us. The college campus is less often the place to be.

In the old days, of course, college professors were deemed to be men and women worthy of respect. But if I ever subconsciously assumed by professing anything myself that I might earn any respect, I have long since been disabused of any such notion. For one thing, the social function of the professor has been radically altered with the redefinition of knowledge. For another, I have known too many college professors to respect them automatically myself. And for yet another, as America's materialism has exploded, we now live in a world in which value is calculated solely by money, and a college president can seriously refer to himself as a C.E.O.

Now I hasten to say that there are today a number of professors whom I do indeed respect, and who are respected by others. I could easily name those I know. But as the curriculum has collapsed into stratified anarchy, so too has the attitude of the professoriate. In the arts and humanities, knowledge itself has been trivialized and even inverted. Today an English professor may declare that she is "an agent of social change," a "philosopher" can be nothing more than a feminist, and a sociologist may be an apologist for, rather than an analyst of, criminality. We would be hard-pressed to deny that part of the problem is the personnel, or that the "tenured radicals," as Roger Kimball has called them, have profoundly altered the academy by occupying it.

I first sniffed the winds of change in New York City when I was 16 years old, and two psychologists whom I met socially grilled me about my suspicious lack of belief in the Soviet system. I thought then that it was curious that academic psychologists should be so lacking in reason, or even information. I think now that they were New Yorkers.

By the time I was at college two years later, I saw that I was in for it. My first discussion on campus was with a belligerent female who, though but a freshman herself, demanded that I explain to her the doubtful notion of a "communist dupe." I did fully explain that concept to her, after which she lectured me for an hour on the virtues of Fidel Castro. I then began to wonder whether I should not have pursued the study of refrigerator repair, rather than Dostoyevsky, whose work began to speak to me more fully than ever before. As for the girl, she later married an African and went on to God knows what.

I began to discover among my classmates a host of "red diaper babies"—the children of the old Popular Front. Their fervor, their arrogance, and their ignorance were all of a piece, essentially religious though secular, and not to be questioned. My reaction was to turn again to the library, where I easily found the substance and the dialogue they could not give me. There is nothing arcane about the reading list I pursued, but it was not assigned in any class.

There was in those days a clear convergence between one kind of reform movement and another. The civil rights movement, whatever the legitimacy of its claims, attracted the ideological left which used it as a pretext, a move subsequently coopted by the federal government. That movement splintered in violence in the 1960's, with the more extreme elements moving on to a remarkable radicalism. It was not long, to move from sit-ins and folk songs to bombs in basements, and it was not far. The same people were involved, and I knew some of them in college, who later wound up on the front page of the newspaper as fugitives from justice.

As I went on to graduate school, I soon found myself confronted by another aggrieved female. At the time, I was attempting to walk into the Graduate Student Union at Colum-

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bia University for a cup of tea. I was informed by an aroused female that no, I was not. The building was occupied. Looking back at the situation, I realize now that I should have hammered her, instead of meekly returning to my room.

Soon the consequences of licensing passion and fanaticism were made clear. The students at Columbia were punished by the police. But the kicker was to receive in the mail a congratulatory note from my erstwhile college professor of Russian literature, who wanted to congratulate me for the great job we students were doing during the riots. I replied to him that Swift, Pope, and Johnson would have rooted for the police, and so did I. Weren't Swift, Pope, and Johnson deemed worthy of study? The professor, a Soviet apologist and a superb lecturer, had to break off his communications with me. I should not have been surprised, after all. For I had long known that the campus was something less than a font of wisdom, however much it flaunts the prestigious totems of culture.

Not long after, I became a "professor" myself. That meant dealing with students and professors who soon refused to finish the semester in recognition of the shootings at Kent State. But the students got their credits, and the professors got their salary.

So much for the professoriate in its explicit political mode, and the only thing new about the story is that it is even worse than imagined. But having jumped from the 60's to the 90's, I want to go back a bit to remark on other forms of radicalism. Bombs in basements seemed a bit counterproductive, so subtler forms of mind-control and more insidious means of power had to be devised.

Probably the most damaging force for divisive nonsense in the last 30 years has been the major offshoot of the civil rights movement, feminism. Its major base has been the academy. Its effort has been to destroy the image of the American family, and therefore the constituent unit of society as we know it. The power of feminism was early recognized by the federal government and by big business, and it has succeeded in rooting itself in law and above all in thought, logic, and language. Though contemporary feminism can be compared to Maoism and to Scientology as a gnostic scam, its efforts have been devastating at the grassroots level. The clichés of feminism have polluted the intellectual environment to a remarkable degree. The other day, an otherwise intelligent professor told me that her unsatisfactory salary made her a victim of "sex discrimination," when in truth she had been treated straightforwardly by a blind system. She could not be confused by facts, and is presently seeking an unearned, undeserved raise which I am sure she will obtain. She will obtain it for two reasons. First, her sexual correspondent will help her politically to obtain it, and second, the system would be glad to institute yet another divisive wedge of favoritism. Well, campus feminists are not so corny now as they were back in the early 1970's, when they actually smoked Virginia Slims and flaunted copies of *Ms.* magazine on their desks. Such radical courage and creativity came prepackaged and showed that radicalism and consumerism had quickly become identical in our vaunted marketplace. The woman I have in mind is, I am told, a broadminded and active heterosexual, but more than passé. Open lesbianism has long been the thing.

When I used to read and hear a great deal of feminist blather about "sexism," I knew that there was something true even about that self-serving propaganda. For I had known something personally about the sexual exploitation—the *willing* exploitation, of course—of female students by male professors. The boys used to be quite open about it, joked about it at faculty meetings, and so on. In effect, to some degree, the feminists were right. Of course, they were not right enough. The aggressive professors were far from rapists. The college girls were asking for it, and they got it, sometimes in the professors' offices. One such incident involved an ex-Luftwaffe instructor whose knowledge of his scientific subject was 100 years out of date. He smoked marijuana on campus, wore an earring, needed a haircut, popped off about mysticism, and was indulged by all. A bit too strange to represent anything but himself, he was nevertheless sustained by an institution of higher learning.

As boring as it is nasty, feminist agitprop is in fact the culture of the campus, a functional substitute for thought and knowledge. It serves a purpose. The fragmentation of knowledge has left the professoriate with little to hold it together except the political shibboleths we know as "political correctness," which is a phenomenon by no means restricted to the campus, for such a powerful political weapon and language is shared by the press and the government. The revolving doors of government—the Clinton cabinet, for example—speak to the identity of America's ruling class with the worst elements of the academy.

Not far behind "racism" and "sexism" comes "homophobia"—the "gay" rights movement being also a direct product of the late 1960's that is now the establishment. Homosexuality is now a sufficient qualification for employment and even for tenure, and may soon be a necessary one. The continued breakdown of the citizenry into alienated and coddled subgroups serves well the strategies of management. Government, big business, and various churches are in accord with the academy on this principle, so that "queer theory" has long been recognized as a legitimate arena of criticism and speculative philosophy. Surely we have all been edified to learn that by extraordinary coincidence the African-American, feminist, and "gay" movements in that order have all discovered extensive literary traditions for themselves, which mandates substantial curricular recognition and therefore the subtraction of previously recognized categories of achievement in writing.

The result is a Babel of discordance, itself contrived to promote manipulation. Reason is the first thing to be dispensed with by the professors of it. When, for example, a religious proselytizer walked onto a campus to distribute tracts, there was strenuous objection from an educationist who claimed that such an intrusion was a violation of "the separation of church and state." He did not care that a private school is not the state, still less that Christianity is a missionary religion. Nor did he acknowledge that he himself was ordained in a faith that denies Christ's divinity. In the contemporary academy, such a progression of fallacies is routine.

Attending a reading by a professor of literature of his own poems, I was rather struck by his announcement, "My subject is American iniquity." This lost him no points with his audience. His poems seemed to be versified editorials on historical outrages such as social phenomena and wars, about which he got quite exercised. He clearly thought that his rage at dead people gained him moral credit, and his audience agreed with him. His views of the world had been fixed in the 1930's and for him the Popular Front still lived, reified in his rhapsodies. For this professor, poetry was an announcement of a lonely superiority which itself ignited an impotent tantrum. For him, there was no tragedy, only the rhetoric of personal feeling and cheap

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virtue. Finally, his poetry was no more than whining. So much for poetry and for culture and history and the profession thereof.

The campus has become all too often the place where the maintenance of distinctions is repudiated rather than affirmed, where the hierarchies of cultural achievement are flattened by those who supposedly uphold them, and where the professed subject is itself dismissed by the professor of it. This is more than a matter of ideology, and more than a matter of the replacement of one generation by another. It is a matter of the replacement of ladies and gentlemen by trash. The result is gangsta rap replacing Glenn Gould, but that is not the only one.

Were we to look for a Lionel Trilling today, a professor with something of his sense of irony and his knowledge could indeed be identified. But we would first have to go through many a mug shot of incompetents and frauds. The spectacle, for example, of persons of no dignity or *gravitas* at all occupying the professor's chair is a curious one, and amounts to a revolution in itself. The image of such a person would not suggest the elegant and sober presence of Lionel Trilling, but rather of a tennis-shoed and bulbous female in tights, such as the one called disaffectionately, "Flab Blob." Her subsidized right to present the grossness of her person in questionable sportsclothes, as well as to express in a babble of unarticulated words the grossness of her mind, is a mark of redoubled degradation. Thou last conquered, O bloated Andrea Dworkin.

I keep away from Flab Blob, myself. In particular, I do not get in an elevator with her or any of the others of her configuration. Above all, I try to avoid the damage that might accrue from actually listening to her run her mouth. But it is a dangerous world, and you have to take it as it comes.

For my own part, though I have noticed in the young people I have encountered an increasing lack of general knowledge, this same lack encountered in credentialed adults has been a cause of frustration and embarrassment. One particular form of this lack is the curious case of the English professor who cannot write. Such an individual must prove the wisdom of the adage, "Those who can, do; those who can't, teach." The lack I am referring to has several dimensions: the lack of information or substance, the lack of discretion or common sense, the lack of grammatical (not to mention rhetorical) command, and so on. The result is a virtual illiteracy which we might expect from a befuddled freshman, but not from a professor. Yet there it is. What to do about it? The answer is, give such an individual tenure, in the best spirit of democracy. When a "challenged" professor realizes that he or she has a "problem," that individual is ever more likely to embrace progressive politics as a substitute profession. Thus, students are taught that thought is patellar, that resentment is both argument and proof, and that grammar is tyranny. Writing becomes fingerprinting, the personal is the political, and, after tenure, how about a male hairdo for the she, and a couple of studs in the earlobe of the he? Thus are faculties formed, and our nation's youth led to enlightenment.

So much for standards in a multicultural academy. "Multiculturalism," a deceptive name, means little of what it denotes. It refers rather to a monolithic relativism that is subscribed to as a common denominator of the resentful and aggrieved, many of whom "profess" traditional subjects for a position of security and even wealth. Our local postmodernist adept of Gramsci has a sports car and a sail boat to complement his neo-Marxism.

What has essentially happened since the 1960's in the academy (and in the nation) is the adoption, by the liberal establishment of America, of radial assumptions and language. The definition of education has gone by the board. The students were recognized as prophets and sages. How could they "learn" or be "taught" when they already knew everything? The "black experience," the "female experience," and homosexual *gnosis* have been the base of theory, the formulation of careers, and the source of knowledge. The Wizard of Oz memorably dispensed a diploma, among other goodies. Today, he is handing out grants and endowed chairs. The Wordsworthian mighty prophet and seer blessed already knows that his or her personal shortcomings or ethnic truculence is more than sufficient claim to authority, and has been sanctioned by all our social and educational mechanisms. The "red diaper" babies imposed an alien vision on America, rewrote the history, and achieved that "cultural hegemony" about which we hear so much these days. Egalitarianism applied to education must have a grotesque result. Democracy means today (not to Jefferson) the decentering of knowledge itself. No wonder that Oprah Winfrey has established a reading list. The Internet will further subvert the meaning of study, so that finally education will occur on campus, as I think it chiefly does now, by accident.

The 'red diaper' babies imposed an alien vision on America, rewrote the history, and achieved that 'cultural hegemony' about which we hear so much these days.

The children of the Old Left now have gray hair to go along with tenure, as the vultures come home to roost. Of course, I have had the experiences, thank God, for which I remained on campus—access to individuals of accomplishment and knowledge and talent, and exposure to culture itself—and for this, I have been grateful. But I cannot forget that too often the gifted were dismissed in favor of "safe" radicals and submediocre minds. A knowledgeable but incoherent lady, only the other day, in trying to explicate the latest imported fraud, could only sputter, "There's nothing." How right she was, not about reality, but about the smug nihilism of multicultural impostures and deconstructionist rant which have turned the Ivory Tower into a Formica Sump.

And how wrong she was, as well. The academy still has its reasons for existence. There are still fine students, worthy professors, and noble topics. The problem is to find them. And there is still the *Goldberg Variations*. That's not so hard to find.

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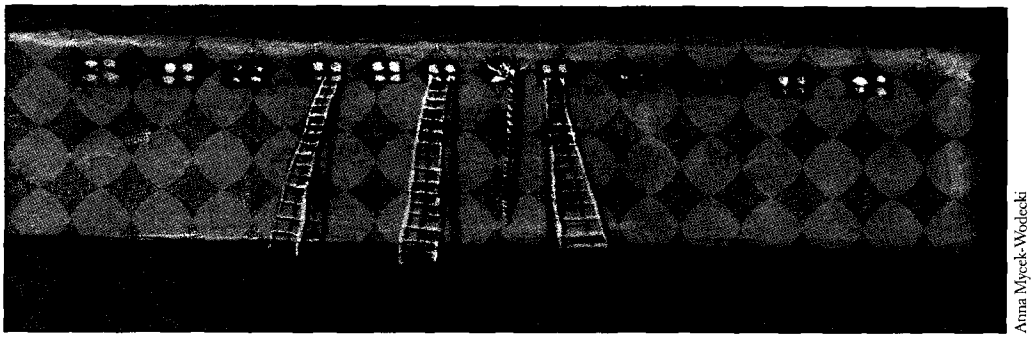
Parietals Then and Now

by Herb London



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

As a Columbia University undergraduate in 1956, I resided in Hartley Hall, a stately building on the Morningside campus. During my orientation week I was introduced to my floor counselor who said in an unambiguous way that hijinks would not be permitted on his watch. He highlighted one rule which could never be disobeyed: women were not permitted in what was then an all-male dorm unless it was during designated hours on the weekend. When visitation was allowed, women had to sign in and a book had to keep one's dorm room door open. Closed doors were considered a violation of the dormitory deportment code and subject to penalty. Of course a few clever students used matchbooks as a door wedge, but they were the exception.

While there were those who balked at the rules and occasionally adolescent men were rowdy—I readily admit to infractions—there was not any doubt about the university's expectation. In fact, the freshmen student guide said Columbia is a place where the "whole man" is developed—including mind and character. In those days character development was taken seriously.

When I played on the basketball team, my coach, Lou Rossini, insisted that we wear ties and jackets when traveling to other schools. On one occasion when we played against the University of Maine and temperatures plummeted to minus ten degrees on the streets of Bangor, I wore a turtleneck and a blazer. Rossini, noticing my attire, said, "If you want to play at Columbia you'll follow a gentleman's code of conduct. I expect all players to wear shirts and ties even if the temperature is 50 below zero." I got the message.

Columbia was not alone in assuming the role of *in loco parentis*. It was believed by administrators at the time that student deportment was an essential part of the university experience. Many students resented these regulations, choosing to exercise their freedom by renting apartments off-campus or joining fraternities and living in frat houses in the hope that the vigilance of student regulations could not easily be maintained.

At the University of Pennsylvania, the student handbook of 1961 noted that it is a "privilege being a University of Pennsylvania student" which "carries with it certain responsibilities." When a student lives up to these responsibilities, "he brings credit not only to himself, his family and his friends but also to his University. The converse is true when a student fails to meet these responsibilities."

In every handbook I read during this period in the early 60's, before the maelstrom of student discontent, the concept of enforcement was predicated on self-discipline. Universities set down the regulations for responsible behavior and students were expected to meet them. An emphasis was placed on order, propriety, and decorum with specific censure of intoxication and bad manners.

Dorm regulations were universally applied. Specified visiting hours for "escorted women" were posted, and in most instances fraternity houses were obliged to adhere to similar rules. If women were visiting men off-campus, it was expected they would receive *permission from their parents*.

It is instructive that social regulations for men and women were written separately. Women were asked to reflect on the question of whether an individual act might adversely affect "the reputation of the university" and whether this act reflects poorly on all women students. It was customary for women's residences to have their own governing body. The large majority of cases in the early 60's dealt with the violation of drinking regulations and an occasional problem with curfews which were routinely 11:00 P.M. for first-semester freshmen (a word now in disuse) and midnight for other students. If there was no evidence of infractions, a curfew of 1:00 A.M. would be considered for the weekend.

Casual attire was prohibited in all academic buildings, laboratories, libraries, and administrative buildings. In one student document after another women were expected to be "ladylike" and men "gentlemanly." Although rarely elaborated on, the intention was clear. Women were chaperoned at parties and men were expected to be well-mannered, especially in the presence of women.

In addition to academic violations such as cheating and plagiarism, which automatically resulted in expulsion, students culpable of flagrant violation of parietals would face suspension. On one matter the university in the 1960's was confident: it had an unequivocal standard of correct student behavior.

Sic fugit. From 1972 to 1992, I was a dean at New York University. During that period I not only observed an incremental but continual alteration in parietals at my home institution and at other institutions across the country. While there are several exceptions to my generalization, Grove City College

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comes to mind, in most instances the student code of conduct based on a standard of correct behavior surrendered to a standard of "correct" thinking.

For example, the Harvard *Handbook for Students* for 1996-97 states that all students are expected to "behave in a mature and responsible manner." But mature and responsible have less to do with behavior today and more to do with a way of thinking. Most of the section on "conduct" deals with complaints of discrimination, harassment of several kinds—sexual, racial, gay and lesbian—and resolving differences.

Clearly, unwanted sexual behavior in colleges and universities should be thwarted, but verbal suggestions in an environment in which hormones are coruscating through adolescent bodies are not easily deterred. Similarly, a mere charge of discrimination is often sufficient to initiate a hearing or complaint procedure whether or not the evidence justifies such investigation. Discrimination now exists in the eye of the beholder.

While I could not locate one student handbook of the early 60's that made specific reference to homosexuals, almost every contemporary student guide makes specific reference to this subgroup. The language invariably notes that principles of respect and toleration must be honored. Conspicuously absent from these declarations is respect or tolerance for orthodox religious groups which do not countenance homosexual behavior.

Several handbooks also assume that gay (the word "homosexual" rarely appears in these guidebooks) students have been subject to harassment by members of the student community even though evidence is not in print to substantiate this claim. Several student codes indicate that students must be *especially cognizant* of abuse leveled at lesbians and gays.

Implicit in these statements is a belief that students enter the university with crude sexual stereotypes, racial antipathy, and an aversion to homosexuals, and that it is incumbent on university officials to change these assumptions. It is not coincidental that at several elite colleges students are obliged to engage in an orientation session that deals primarily with student prejudice and ways to overcome it. After observing these sessions in which unwary students are obliged to admit harboring prejudicial feelings, several commentators have described this psychological intimidation as "reeducation." One colleague describes colleges engaged in this training as "the University of Peking in the United States."

Current orientation sessions involve another curious ideological entrapment. At such meetings 17-year-olds are often asked whether they are sexually confused. If they answer affirmatively, members of the Mattachine Society or the Gay and Lesbian Alliance are asked to counsel these students. The fact many 17-year-olds are confused about their sexuality is no reason to believe they are potential homosexuals. Yet legitimacy exists for gays and lesbians to engage in active recruitment, notwithstanding the general lack of any heterosexual counseling service on campus. It is also the case that since males can select their roommates, homosexuals may live together even though heterosexuals cannot. At some colleges recognition of this condition has led to separate dormitory floors being designated for homosexuals only.

For a typical first-year student inexperienced in the ways of the world, this orientation to university life is jarring. If the university maintains the status of *in loco parentis*, then it is substituting its own code of ideological adaptation for a traditional parental code most students imbibed from childhood. The university says implicitly, and increasingly explicitly, that everything you have learned about right and wrong must be relearned using the university's ideological litmus test.

As one might suppose, confusion is often the result of this culture clash. Several years ago, a young man residing in a university dorm told me the following story. A young woman with a "crush" on him visited his dorm room late at night. She proceeded to beseech him for sexual favors in a most direct way. The young man, from a traditional home, was perplexed. If he allowed himself to be seduced, he would violate his religious convictions; if he rejected this woman's overtures, he feared being mocked by his peers. Torn between tradition and peer group pressure, he sought counsel.

A psychology professor told him to do what feels best, let your instinct be your guide. I said let your conscience be your guide, which in the present scheme of things is a retrograde point of view. In the end I do not know how this student resolved his dilemma, but I do know he was distraught over the incident.

For those students who assume religion is communal observance, there are many problems on campus. Theme dorms (a euphemism for ethnic or racial segregation) are countenanced on many campuses, but religious segregation is usually frowned on. The assumption is that religion is a matter of personal inclination, while racial and ethnic affiliation are perforce communal.

It is obvious that the early 60's and the present are worlds apart. Rules based on civility and morality have retreated before an ideological steamroller. Students are now in the position of having their thoughts manipulated and any traditionalist stance ridiculed. A so-called code of conduct is actually a code of conformist thinking.

Admittedly, the era in the early 60's demanded conformity as well. But this was the conformity of deportment, a way for gentlemen and ladies to behave in polite and refined company. Of course even the mention of deportment has a quaint ring to it. Now students and faculty members address one another by their first names, use the "f" word routinely as an adjective for everything from tests to institutional food, and generally dress as if they are unmade beds.

Much has been lost in the last 25 years. Charles Eliot, the erstwhile president of Harvard, once said, "The reason there is so much intelligence at the university is freshmen bring so much in and as seniors take so little out." Unfortunately, what students bring in today is not what they take out. It is not merely the abandonment of deportment rules, albeit they are more important than contemporary students assume, but the brainwashing in relativism, multiculturalism, and the critique of religion and tradition.

The university is still a surrogate parent, but not one who worries about the emotional well-being of progeny. Rather the university is a self-designated revolutionary changing the rules that promote social order, while fostering confusion and undermining a moral sensibility. It was not easy adjusting to life in the academy several decades ago. Nevertheless, a student knew what was expected, was told how to behave, and recognized a standard of gentlemanly behavior. That world is now lost and, at least for me, lamented. In the interest of truth-in-advertising, most universities should say to incoming students, "Welcome to the brave new world where truth is relative, everything you've learned before must be forgotten, and sensitivity training awaits you." ©

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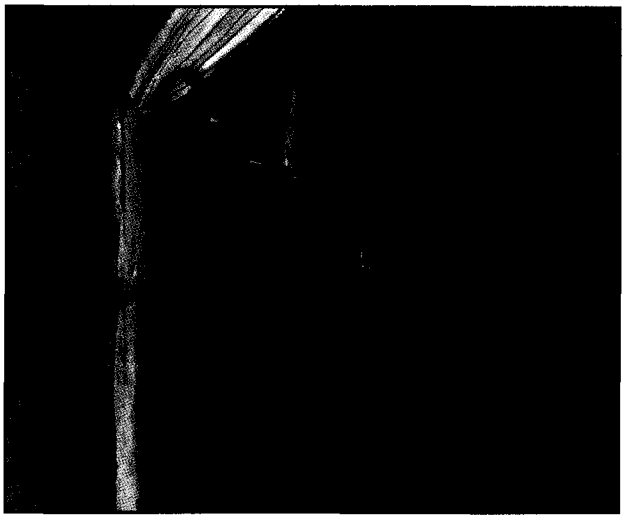
Good Manners, Good Literature

by Richard Wilbur



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

For this very welcome and unexpected award, I thank The Ingersoll Foundation and all concerned. When I was in high school, there were certain books that I carried around in order to impress people with my literariness. One was the *Collected Poems* of Hart Crane, whom I didn't altogether understand, but whose words made me dizzy. Another was a slender book of James Joyce's poems; the poems inside it were melodious, conventional, and easy to understand, but the book's cover gave other people the impression that I was reading an author both difficult and scandalous. A third book that I carried with me like a sword or attribute was T.S. Eliot's *Collected Poems* of 1935. The book was physically delectable; it was bound in blue, and its pages were crisp and creamy like hearts of lettuce; it was a kind of transcendental sandwich, and though I didn't understand all the poems in it, I did consume them. It seems to me that the books I used for purposes of ostentation were in fact well-chosen, for I was truly drawn to them, and when I was through showing off by their means, I went on to know them better and better. What I first loved in Eliot was his mastery of tone and of changes of tone, his power to marshal various voices, and his ability, in such a poem as "Sweeney Among the Nightingales," to take a form suggestive of light verse and be savagely serious in it. I still admire all those things, though for me Eliot has come to be above all the poet of that great poem of spiritual struggle, "Ash Wednesday." It is an especial honor to receive a prize which bears his name.

Because I am generally accounted a formalist poet, I should like to say something this afternoon about form and order and the making of order. The other day, a man I didn't know came up to me and said, "I saw your latest poem in the *New Yorker*. What a pleasure to read iambic pentameter again!" I thanked him, and was glad to have met a reader who, after several decades of free verse ascendancy, could still recognize a meter. At the same time I hoped that he did not, as some do, nostalgically confuse formal poetry with conservatism, law and order, and the old-fashioned virtues and verities. The fact is that iambic pentameter is in itself meaningless, and belongs to no age or party; it is simply an instrument, like a No. 2 pencil, and as such can be used either well or badly.

In life, of course, there are many forms which are meaningful in themselves and of great value. I think, for instance, of good manners. Some of my college students of the 1960's, believing themselves to be naturally good and loving, rejected good manners along with certain other things, such as attractive dress and correct grammar, which they believed to be artificial. That was a sad mistake. Manners are no more coercive than a dance step is coercive, and indeed they are liberating: seating ladies and opening doors for people, and writing thank-you notes to grandmother, are acts of compliance with a code, but they also facilitate social dealings and the growth and expression of true kindness. The forms of religion can also be benignly enabling. Eleanor Clark, when living in Italy, found herself drawn toward the Roman Church, and she asked an Italian Catholic friend how she could best find out whether Catholicism was for her. The friend said, "Go to Mass. Kneel when the others kneel. Do and say what the others do and say. Ultimately you will have a Catholic experience." Similarly T.S. Eliot, at one stage of his religious quest, reversed St. Paul by valuing the letter above the spirit. On the American stage, we are familiar with so-called "studio" acting, in which the actor creates the role by going deep into this own subjectivity; but there is another kind of theater in which performances are shaped externally by the director in accordance with his knowledge of the play. I am told that Herman Shumlin would sometimes address an actor in such terms as these: "Take two steps forward, raise your eyebrows, hold out your hands, and say the line." That may sound brutal, but Edmund Burke would understand and approve, and I am sure that many actors have learned by such means what their characters were feeling.

So, there are forms and outward disciplines which may be enhancing and enlarging. The world is also full, as we know, of dismal routines and of oppressions large and small. People who, like me, visited the Soviet Union in the pre-Gorbachev days, may not have encountered the gulags, but they did encounter

Richard Wilbur was the recipient of The Ingersoll Foundation's 1996 T.S. Eliot Award for Creative Writing, for which this was his acceptance speech.

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much wariness and protective dishonesty, and they were able to see how a tyrannical government trivializes most of its citizens. When people are powerless, when they dare not think for themselves and have no say in anything, they are too readily reduced to mean material concerns—to envying the neighbor's fur hat and trying to wangle a better television. All order, alas, is not good; it wasn't quite enough for Mussolini to make the trains run on time; and I think of a French man of letters who, recalling the Vichy regime and its apologists, observed that no people have ever raised a monument to Order.

Which brings me back to poetry. Toward the end of his poem, "The Idea of Order at Key West," Wallace Stevens exclaims, "Oh! Blessed rage for order." What he is celebrating is the power of art to create imaginative unities in which both the spirit and the objective world are fully and truly expressed. Such unities of vision, in which self and world meet at the full, are the great forms which poetry achieves, and which formal techniques like rhyme and meter merely serve to implement. When poetry does not bring "the whole soul of man into activity," as Coleridge says it must, or when it does violence to outward reality, it fails, and here is a well-known little poem of Stevens' about a poetic failure. It is called "Anecdote of the Jar":

I placed a jar in Tennessee,
And round it was, upon a hill.
It made the slovenly wilderness
Surround that hill.

The wilderness rose up to it,
And sprawled around, no longer wild.
The jar was round upon the ground
And tall and of a port in air.

It took dominion everywhere.
The jar was gray and bare.
It did not give of bird or bush,
Like nothing else in Tennessee.

That jar declares itself to be the center of a circle, and thus organizes the wilderness of Tennessee; but it does so in such a way as to nullify the wild birds and bushes, while asserting its own sterile dominion. What the jar accomplishes is not an imaginative interplay between jar and wilderness, but an imposition of itself, a tyranny; it is a little pre-Gorbachev Kremlin of a jar, and Stevens elsewhere sums the matter up by saying, "A violent order is a disorder."

There are various ways in which poetry can leave things out and thus be less than itself—through the distortions of propaganda, for instance, through the omissions of sentimentality, through the evasions of timidity. At its best, poetry has always confronted our sorrows and described our fears, and I want to offer a modest but genuine example of that—a poem by the mid-19th-century English writer Charles Kingsley, the author of *Westward Ho!*:

When all the world is young, lad,
And all the trees are green;
And every goose a swan, lad,
And every lass a queen;
Then hey for boot and horse, lad,
And round the world away:
Young blood must have its course, lad,
And every dog his day.

When all the world is old, lad,
And all the trees are brown;
And all the sport is stale, lad,
And all the wheels run down,
Creep home and take your place there
The spent and maimed among;
God grant you find one face there
You loved when all was young!

What that says is pretty awful: it says that we begin life full of adventurous energy and romance, and end in weariness, disillusion, and lonely infirmity. Those assertions may not be universally true, but they have some painful pertinence to everyone, and so one might ask why such a grim message is wittily conveyed in clever rhymes and a rollicking ballad meter. Is Kingsley sugarcoating a bitter pill? I don't think so. For one thing, the jaunty ballad rhythms are appropriate to the youthful vigor and zest evoked in the first stanza, and the same rhythms are poignantly slowed as the poem saddens. For another thing, the poem's breezy movement reflects the high morale that poetry always has when it faces up to depressing or dreadful truths. Auden, in his elegy for Yeats, urges poets to

Sing of human unsuccess
In a rapture of distress,

and there is indeed a sort of rapture in any line of verse which articulately braves the darker areas of our experience. A recent magazine article about Yevgeny Kissim spoke of music as a way of mastering bad noises; poetry, which aspires to the fullest possible consciousness, masters bad thoughts by uttering them perfectly. I think that Shakespeare must have rejoiced when he got our fears of the grave into one horrible line: "To lie in cold obstruction and to rot."

I seem to have come round, now, to talking about meter and rhyme and verse-forms as they may further the utterance of a poem. The founders of the free verse movement (people like Ford and Pound and Williams) envisioned it as a kind of recess period—a "formless interim," as Williams put it—after which poetry would return to a fresh formality. Unfortunately, the free verse experiment, like most experiments, became institutionalized, and has dragged on for most of this century, producing a certain number of triumphs and a lot of dreary minced prose. As a result, there are many writers and readers who don't understand what meter is and how it works. They imagine that Pound was correct in his foolish statement that metrical verse is metronomic; they suppose that words in a metrical stanza are like soldiers doing close-order drill and striving for a maximum of mechanical regularity.

That's not how it is at all. A metrical form—the pentameter, for instance—is an underlying paradigm or model which we never hear, though a line like Tennyson's "The woods decay, the woods decay and fall" may come near conforming to that silent model. What one does in writing a metrical poem is to outrage the paradigm, to counterpoint the unheard model with the rhythms of emotion or description or dramatic speech. The result is that those rhythms, underlined by variance from the tidy norm, are heightened, strong, and definite in a way that

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the rhythms of prose or free verse can never be. Enjambment—the spilling-over of one line into the next—is also an expressive violation of the norm, because the tidy pentameter norm wants us to pause at the end of every five-foot measure; when we don't, when we brush aside that pause and plunge into the next line, we do it in support of the poem's meaning, emphasizing perhaps some impetuous emotion or some sustained and headlong action. If one were describing in verse a 90-yard broken-field run for a touchdown, a good bit of enjambment would be called for.

Rhyme, together with the other sound-effects of a poem, can cast a musical spell, and that music is best when most attuned to the larger purposes of the poem. There are many other ways, as well, in which rhyme can be functional: it can serve to emphasize important words; it can make important linkages between key words; it can demarcate the stages of an argument; it can help a witty statement to close with a bang; by the dense repetition of a few sounds, it can orchestrate obsession or abiding grief, as in Robert Frost's poem "Bereft." Some of the things rhyme can do for a poem are almost too subtle to talk about. For instance, when two lines rhyme, and one of the rhyme-words has more force than the other, the disparity can tell us in what tone or tones those lines should be read. I put in evidence the first four lines of a Gerard Manley Hopkins sonnet, a sonnet that's full of spiritual anguish:

> No worst, there is none. Pitched past pitch of grief,
> More pangs will, schooled at forepangs, wilder wring.
> Comforter, where, where is your comforting?
> Mary, mother of us, where is your relief?

"Wring" is a strong rhyme-word, and "comforting," in the next line, rhymes very weakly with it. If I am not mistaken, we are thereby instructed to read that whole line about the absence of the Holy Spirit—"Comforter, where, where is your comforting?"—in a weak, spiritless, and broken way.

Let me say a little about those traditional verse forms which were bequeathed to us by the masters—by those whom Yeats addresses as "sages standing in God's holy fire." When a formal poet feels a poem coming on, he reaches into the toolbox of traditional means and picks out a meter which seems likely to suit his hazily emerging thought; he tentatively decides whether the services of rhyme will be needed; he tries to foresee whether the argument of his poem will want to be paragraphed into stanzas; and then he gets going—knowing, of course, that as his poem finds its voice he may change his mind about what devices will further it. Many formal poems, nowadays, are constructed in that ad hoc fashion, and they sometimes arrive at rhyme-schemes and stanza patterns which are quite without precedent or name. On the other hand, the poet has a splendid resource in all those tested verse-forms which have been handed down to us: the couplet, the canzone, the Spenserian stanza, the rondeau, the sonnet, and so on. These various structures have something of that benign, enabling character which I ascribed to good manners, but with the difference that they are all optional, and should only be used when they are peculiarly appropriate to some incipient utterance. Robert Frost once said something like this: that if you feel like saying something for about eight lines, and then qualifying or unsaying it for six lines or so, you are probably about to write a Petrarchan sonnet. That is the way it should happen: the beginning poem, as it materializes, should choose the form whose logic will provide it with precision, economy, and power.

Every form has its particular logic and capabilities; if an epigram is on the tip of one's tongue, it should probably find utterance in a smartly rhyming couplet or quatrain, and it would be pointless folly to try to inflate it into a sonnet. There are certain reiterative forms, like the villanelle and sestina, which are designed to accommodate the mind's hashing and rehashing of a subject; if sestinas and villanelles ruminate to some purpose, they can be splendid; but if they are not driven by a strong need to turn some subject over and over, if they amount to no more than the fulfilling of a tricky pattern, then they are vacuous and interminable.

Lest I be interminable, let me call a halt to all this technical talk. I hope to have made it clear that I have no interest in form for form's sake. The meter-using poets of my generation would surely say the same, as would the excellent younger formalists who are now occupying the field, such as Timothy Steele, Mary Jo Salter, Emily Grosholz, Dana Gioia, R.S. Gwynn, and many another. All these would join me, I believe, in agreeing with Ralph Waldo Emerson, who said that "it is not meters, but a meter-making argument that makes a poem."

As for this sort of prize-giving occasion, I think it is a truly benign form, and once again I express my thanks. ◁

LIBERAL ARTS

GRADE INFLATION

As the Associated Press reported in June, a former teacher at Lake Zurich High School in Illinois has been charged with official misconduct and intimidation. Prosecutors say that Douglas Petrovitch, 28, attempted to trade A grades with his students for merchandise at the department stores where they worked. In one case Petrovitch was arrested while trying to leave a Target department store with $1,000 worth of merchandise which he had purchased for $111. Another student "traded a $50 gift certificate to a restaurant owned by his father for an A, and a fourth bought lunch for the teacher several times in exchange for his grade." Upon learning he was being investigated, Petrovitch called the students and threatened to break their kneecaps with a baseball bat if they talked to the police.

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City of Man, City of God

by James Hitchcock

"Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God."
—Psalms LXXXVII

Heart of the World, Heart of the Church
by David L. Schindler
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans;
340 pp., $37.50

This rich and complex book is on one level the summing up of a controversy over a properly Christian, specifically Catholic, view of politics which has pitted the author, a theologian, against certain "neoconservative" thinkers, notably Richard Neuhaus, Michael Novak, and George Weigel. Beyond them, Schindler takes issue with the late Jesuit theologian John Courtney Murray, whose specialty was church-state relations and who is credited with the only original American contribution to the Second Vatican Council—the decree on religious liberty.

Murray is hailed, both in secular and religious circles, for refuting once and for all the idea of the union of church and state, at one time held by almost all religions and abandoned especially late by some Catholics. Murray claimed that the "neutrality" of the American political system makes possible an uninhibited Christian embrace of modern democracy, since neutrality proves to offer the most favorable climate for the development of religion. Schindler, however, considers this neutrality a "con job," arguing that it embodies a secular ideology. Believers are invited to participate in the system without realizing that they are being required to prescind from their faith, to become "a-theists." Hence, in Schindler's view, Catholic neoconservatives are unduly optimistic about the exceptional character of American, as opposed to European, democracy.

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

While his thesis may be true, it requires a good deal more historical exploration than Schindler offers. Presumably he agrees with those who think the United States was from its inception the child of the antireligious Enlightenment, but here that is merely assumed. Oddly, given his purposes, Schindler does not examine the nation's founding documents and their subsequent interpretation, in spite of the national debate proceeding in—among other places—the halls of the Supreme Court. The real problem with the First Amendment is not its implicit ideology but its cryptic character. No one knows what "respecting an establishment of religion" means, so the debate continues.

As a philosopher Schindler appears to believe that he who says A must say B, whereas a historian would reply that he who says A can then say just about anything he pleases—not because the historian rejects the authority of logic but because he realizes that very few people are logical. Thus, whatever may have been the intention of the Founding Fathers, the present civil-libertarian understanding of the Religion Clause was not simply determined from the beginning. All such things tend finally to be shaped by a series of historical contingencies, which means that at many points in history another road might have been taken. For example, Joseph Story, one of the greatest justices of the Supreme Court and an authoritative commentator on the Constitution, held that the common law incorporated Christianity. The modern understanding of the Religion Clause is traceable to the appointment of certain justices to the Supreme Court by President Franklin Roosevelt, although it is unlikely that Roosevelt desired, intended, or even foresaw the effect those appointments would eventually have on religion. Thus, in a sense, the present jurisprudence of the First Amendment is due to the Great Depression and the New Deal to which it gave rise. So, also, the Republican promise to mount a counterrevolution was thwarted by a series of political contingencies. Schindler addresses this subject in a footnote, citing the opinion of another theologian that in the long run the contradictions inherent in false interpretations will reveal themselves. But history shows oth-

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erwise, Christianity itself being the prime example: all Christians claim fidelity to the teachings of Christ, yet their differences, ecumenism notwithstanding, only deepen with time.

In arguing against Murray's optimism, Schindler insists that he does not advocate the union of church and state—an error he sees as the right-wing equivalent of liberation theology—while he hints at the alternative solution by suggesting that Christians should maintain a clear distinction between state and society. Presumably he means that Christians should work to transform the culture itself, but he gives little indication of how they might go about it. Indeed, in his book Schindler slights culture and society in favor of politics. In a sense the American experience has been a double one: if the Founding Fathers really were secularists, there has also existed from the beginning a powerful strain of evangelical Christianity which has affected the culture more deeply than has the spirit of the Enlightenment. The character of American public life cannot be defined solely by its constitutional documents.

Schindler alludes to this fact in questioning the claim by neoconservatives that America, compared with other advanced nations, is deeply religious, pointing out how in so many ways this professed faith is at odds with behavior. To Schindler the situation demonstrates the hollowness of the claim that the United States is somehow exceptional in the modern West, and he cites Will Herberg to explain this secularity as an unintended product of Calvinism. A more obvious explanation, however, is simply sin. There are indeed gulfs between what Americans profess and how they act, but probably no more so than among the knights and merchants, craftsmen and peasants, monks and ministers of past societies.

Once again: the roots of American problems are more social and cultural than political. The practical secularism which Schindler correctly identifies as part of the prevailing American spirit owes much more to the phenomenon called the 60's than it does to the First Amendment. The radical reinterpretation of the Constitution was made possible to a large extent by the cultural revolution. As no less a personage than the professional anti-Catholic Paul Blanshard once admitted, the real issue for him was sex and not, as he claimed, the alleged dangers of union of church and state. While Schindler rightly points to the weaknesses of American religiosity, it is true nonetheless that personal religious belief and public religious testimony—religion's ability to effect both individual conversions and group action—appear stronger in the United States than in any other advanced industrial nation.

Schindler questions Novak's defense of capitalism on the ground that, in calling attention to the social benefits produced by economic self-interest, Novak obscures the obligations Christians are under to transcend self-interest for the sake of love. He revises Adam Smith's famous example of the baker by saying that a Christian baker, while not indifferent to profit, would make the best bread possible under any circumstance, consciously seeking the good of his customers. No doubt there are capitalists who live up to this ideal, but Schindler is correct in saying that the inherent dynamic of capitalism does not require that they do so, thereby prodding the Christian to set his religion aside in order to participate fully in the life of the society. One of the most useful parts of the book is its careful analysis of John Paul II's view of liberalism and capitalism, Schindler arguing persuasively that the neoconservatives' position is not as close to the Pope's as they claim. Yet Schindler's quarrel with the neoconservatives is in one sense premature. The leaders of American Catholicism, including most of its bishops, are not neoconservatives but liberals. If this leadership were to adopt the ideas of Neuhaus, Novak, and Weigel, it would be pulled sharply to the "right" in ways Schindler would presumably find agreeable. Were this to happen—which is unlikely—the debate could finally begin.

Responding to Father Theodore Hesburgh of the University of Notre Dame (surely an unreconstructed liberal, not a neoconservative), Schindler argues that the liberal idea of the university is incompatible with a genuinely Christian outlook, and that the prescriptions for a Catholic university offered by Hesburgh and others are far from being radical enough. He urges that Christians transcend the "objective" approach to knowledge supposedly honored in modern universities and accept the full implications of a love for truth. But here again the American political tradition has little to do with the present state of academia, which long ago chose to model itself on the methodologically secular German academic system. Until the late 19th century, distinctively American institutions of higher education were pervasively religious.

Schindler's most valuable, and also most difficult, work in this book is his attempt to establish a proper theological foundation for the Christian approach to the world. Drawing especially on the work of two deceased European theologians, Henri De Lubac and Hans Urs von Balthasar, he nevertheless makes his own original contribution to the subject. De Lubac argued against a kind of Thomism which so sharply separated reason and faith that it is possible to think of human beings in their natural state as being "a-religious" (except insofar as reason leads to God) with a sense of the "supernatural" subsequently added to their makeup. For De Lubac and others in the Augustinian tradition, the desire for and movement toward God *is* part of man's natural state. Schindler argues that Murray's "a-theistic" approach to politics fails to take account of this religious reality, asking the believer, as it were, to bracket his faith.

A related issue is the meaning of freedom. The American system guarantees "freedom from" (oppression, discrimination, etc.), whereas the properly Christian understanding is "freedom for." It is not possible to understand freedom without knowing how the free person should act; freedom is not an empty vessel merely waiting to be filled. Schindler thinks that contemporary discussions of freedom, including theological discussions, overemphasize its creative aspect, disregarding the extent to which it must first of all be "receptive"—free obedience, as in Mary's "*fiat*" to the Annunciation. The heart of the matter is the "spousal" relationship between Christ and His Church taught by St. Paul, an understanding which allows for both freedom *and* obedience, creativity *and* receptivity.

This book deserves to be a crucial part of every fruitful theological discussion for some time to come. There remains, however, the question whether the approach to public life by corporate religious bodies, as distinct from that by individuals, in fact requires a church-government, even though David Schindler denies that it does.

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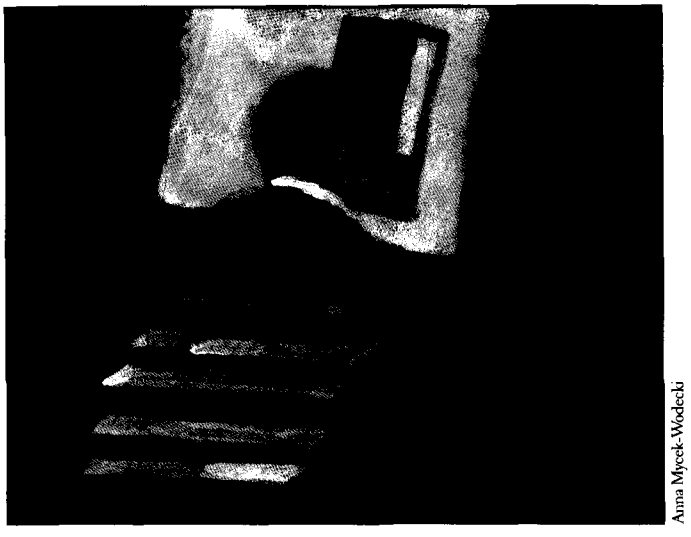
A Prophet's Reward

by Ralph de Toledano

"Every honest man is a prophet."
—Blake



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Whittaker Chambers
by Sam Tanenhaus
New York: Random House;
638 pp., $35.00

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What is now known as the Hiss case exploded across the front pages of the nation's newspapers on August 4, 1948. The day before, Whittaker Chambers—a short, stocky man in a rumpled grey suit—had taken the stand before the House Un-American Activities Committee to testify that a number of Americans, some of them highly regarded by the liberal establishment and its media handmaidens, were members of a communist cell in the federal government. To the country at large, the name Whittaker Chambers meant nothing. To the press corps covering the hearing or reading about it, he was known as one of the most brilliant editors in the Time-Life empire—a man who could write with equal eloquence about Marian Anderson, Reinhold Niebuhr, Joseph Stalin, Mao Tse-tung, St. Benedict, or poets like Rilke.

The Chambers testimony would have been buried in HUAC's archive but for two things. Harry Dexter White, who had been an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury and who controlled Henry Morgenthau, the titular head of the department, took the stand to deny all and, having made a stirring speech about Americanism, shuffled off this mortal coil in a great show of martyrdom. Whether he committed suicide or coincidentally lost control of his heart will never be known, for his remains were hastily cremated. What opened up the Hiss case was Alger himself, who shrewdly realized that to remain silent would be considered an admission of guilt and who therefore decided, taking his cue from Mark Twain, that the better part of valor was to lie with *panache*.

That Whittaker Chambers was the accusing angel confused and deceived the press, which had over the years developed a technique for destroying the credibility of witnesses who came forth with accounts of their life in the Communist Party: indignation, innuendo, and malign invention. The more it probed, the more it discovered the real nature of the subject. Asked how he could testify to events of a decade earlier without tripping over his feet, Chambers answered, "It is simple if you are telling the truth." But his major strength was that he was not defending himself, but defending a philosophy which was unassailable. Ironically, what made Chambers convincing was the shamelessness of the attack on him—an attack which was led by a President of the United States and a former First Lady whose connection with the *apparat* would be documented much later.

The details of the case—the typewriter on which Priscilla Hiss had copied a pyramid of top secret State Department documents for the Soviet secret police, the kitchen middens of the Hisses' private lives, the manner in which they twisted and turned to avoid and evade their acts of complicity—had less effect in contributing to the drama of the case than the Whittaker Chambers whose trousers never knew the dignity of a crease, and the dapper, almost mincing Alger Hiss. For as the case progressed, it became increasingly clear that Chambers was not just another in the long list of witnesses who had given testimony to the treason of Americans in and out of government, but in the religious sense a witness for the civilization and the values under attack by the tacit alliance of Leninists and liberals. (In other guises, that alliance still exists and still feeds its

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Ralph de Toledano's Notes from the Underground: The Whittaker Chambers-Ralph de Toledano Letters, 1949-1960 *will be published this fall by Regnery.*

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hatred of the West—and of God and man—as it argues that the tse-tse fly is superior to humankind.)

It was this new dimension of anticommunism that caught the imagination of the people, though the media tried to reduce it to the formula of "Who is lying—Hiss or Chambers?" And it was this new dimension which overrode the efforts of the rich and politically favored to dismiss the case as the product of right-wing fanaticism. That effort took many forms. Hiss was made to seem the parfit gentle knight of diplomacy and, paradoxically, at the hands of ego-enlarged journalists like David Halberstam, as "just a clerk." Simultaneously, Chambers was berogued and Richard Nixon belabored on the false assumption that he had forced the confrontation to litigation. The Leslie Fiedlers and Diana Trillings, in the then see-sawing pages of *Commentary*, distorted history or invoked Freud to discover all kinds of subtleties, accepting the guilt of Hiss but denigrating Chambers.

With the conviction of Hiss, Chambers retired to his farm in Westminster, Maryland—in a way content to be a full-time dairy farmer, though aware that penury lay ahead if he put aside his typewriter. After the trials and for the first time since he had disclosed the espionage aspects of the Soviet *apparat* in Washington, he heard from his allegedly close friend Henry Luce in a letter which evoked some bitter laughter from those to whom it was shown. Luce's letter recognized the Chambers ordeal, but added (this is somewhat paraphrased since I had only one quick look at the document), "I too have had an ordeal. I cannot decide whether to run for the Senate." Chambers had been a Quaker for many years; to his great pain the American Friends Service Committee, the political and left-wing arm of Quakerism, openly espoused the Hiss cause.

In *Whittaker Chambers*, Sam Tanenhaus has gathered the facts of Whittaker Chambers' life and background from childhood on. In the middle 1950's, Chambers wrote nostalgically of his boyhood years on Long Island—then unlaced by superhighways and unpunctuated by Levitt-towns—with a love that Tanenhaus misses. Yet his biography is the result of prodigious research going back to original sources on the activities and events which took Whittaker Chambers through his stormy years at Columbia (again missing the betrayal by that friend of the left on the campus, Professor Mark Van Doren), his involvement in the Communist Party which brought him international recognition for his writings in the *Daily Worker* and the *New Masses*, his life in the underground, and his return, in Dante's words, *a riveder le stelle*. Much of this has been rehearsed in *Witness*, in my *Seeds of Treason*, and in Allen Weinstein's meticulously documented *Perjury*: but Tanenhaus dots many an *i* and crosses many a *t* in detail that is fascinating, as everything about Whittaker Chambers fascinates. And he solves the mystery of the alleged visit to Moscow, Chambers' strong denials of which seemed to be contradicted by the evidence.

Though Tanenhaus's account of the trials are by far the best I have read, he does not quite catch the drama: the press room a battlefield on which the pro-Hiss reporters began to retreat as the litigation proceeded, and where Victor Lasky (preparing to cash in on the book I wrote) sailed paper airplanes out over Foley Square inscribed, "Hiss is guilty"; Priscilla Hiss looking at the jury with sedated pinpoint eyes and destroying herself with irrelevant falsehoods; the theatrics of defense counsel Lloyd Paul Stryker, who won Hiss the first trial's hung jury and for his efforts was denied payment; the galaxy of politically and socially important people who took seats in the courtroom (passes were required for most; I still have mine) which should have gone to those who futilely sought admission. When in my *Newsweek* reportage I wrote that Stryker made a point and "triumphantly shot his cuffs," he sought me out. "My wife read what you wrote," he said, "and she says I'm a ham."

For his researches, and for having sought out possibly every friend, associate, co-worker, and enemy still alive of Whittaker Chambers, Sam Tanenhaus is to be commended. Too many biographers today suck their facts out of overworked thumbs. But where the book fails is in recapturing the period between the end of the trial and the death of Whittaker Chambers in 1961. There are two written sources for this period—the letters to William F. Buckley, Jr., which deal for the most part in political matters, and those written to me, which are deeply personal and reflect the writer's sorrows, torments, hopes, and thoughts. (The Buckley letters were published years ago, and Regnery will publish mine late this summer or early this fall.) While Tanenhaus was working on his book I spent many hours talking to him, turning over material that would be of help, and giving him copies of the letters which Chambers had written to me and to my late wife Nora, which I had turned over to the Hoover Library in Palo Alto.

Tanenhaus has used this primary research sparingly and sometimes does violence to it, as when he attempts to demonstrate that in his last years Whittaker Chambers had begun a retreat from what Arthur Schlesinger, in his review of *Witness*, referred to as his "apocalyptic" beliefs. In fact, my correspondence with Chambers underscores what he wrote in that book, and records his regret that he did not state it more positively. Where Chambers made clear that the possibility of nuclear war, which he felt was very remote, did not disturb his sleep, Tanenhaus puts him in the other camp. He argues that Chambers returned in this period to the middle-class complacencies he had fought against all his life, as reflected by his alleged hopes for a life of *suburbia in excelsis* for his son. Yet, as his letters hint, and as he said to close friends, a great disappointment to him was that John Chambers chose a life as a television broadcaster, instead of returning to the land on which he had been reared.

The controversy surrounding Senator Joseph R. McCarthy is badly handled by Tanenhaus who has Richard Nixon engineering a Chambers-McCarthy meeting in January 1950, before Nixon was in the Senate or the Wisconsin senator had made his famous speech at Wheeling, West Virginia. Tanenhaus's few pages recapitulating the McCarthy *jihad* are distressingly fictional, down to the assertion that in his Wheeling speech he referred to "205" communists in the government. No one knows what McCarthy said and, though a Democratic Senate spent a small fortune investigating, they were never able to find a single person or news story that sustained the "205," the "57," or the "83" of myth.

This is irrelevant to Chambers' position on McCarthy. Whittaker Chambers knew that there were a host of people still in the State Department and the government whose primary loyalty was to the U.S.S.R., and he believed that setting firm numbers was an exercise in futility. What Chambers said to me and to others was: "McCarthy is a scoundrel,

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but he's our scoundrel." In letters to former associates at Time-Life, he argued that there were many ways to fight communism. McCarthy's way might not be his or theirs, but it had its uses. He refused to comment publicly on McCarthy for many reasons, one of which was that in the long run it would hurt the anti-communist cause.

Tanenhaus broadly implies that Chambers resigned from *National Review* and broke ideologically with Bill Buckley on grounds of policy, even as he says that Chambers was "dismissed" from *Time*. Neither the implication nor the statement is true. To the end of his life Chambers harbored a deep friendship with and gratitude toward Buckley; he resigned from *National Review* because the fortnightly visit to New York was too taxing. It took enough out of him to be the magnet for the great and the small who made pilgrimages to Westminster and sought intellectual sustenance there. Tanenhaus, moreover, has not the slightest understanding of how and why Chambers almost converted to Catholicism, and then retreated. Even after that retreat he was in constant correspondence with a group of intellectual priests—he was four-square for the medieval church. Tanenhaus ought to have read with greater care the essay Chambers wrote on St. Benedict for Clare Boothe Luce's anthology *Saints for Now*.

Those later years tell us much about the young man who turned his back on the pounding surf of Lynbrook and contemplated the ruins of the Weimar Republic. It is uncertain why a man in his late 50's, certain that death waited behind the arras, should have gone to school to study Russian. He had Spanish and French and Italian and German and Latin—but he felt that only through thrusting himself into the language of Dostoevsky and Peter the Great and Vladimir Ilyitch could he understand the country that sought to be the Third Rome and almost brought about the end of Western civilization. But of greater importance is Tanenhaus's lack of empathy with a man who could, in an hour's conversation, bring you to a realization of the contemporary crisis and shake the pillars of your life as Samson did for those in Gaza.

Whittaker Chambers agreed with me that one of the most acute political statements of our time was made by Groucho Marx, when asked where he lived. "I moved," said Groucho. He also saw Groucho's "If we had some ham, we could have ham and eggs—if we had some eggs," as a summation of liberal economics. That is why he thought that Ludwig von Mises' V-8 lacked several cylinders. And why he could appreciate John Kenneth Galbraith, even as he disagreed with him.

Several generations have cast their pall on our contemporaneity since Whittaker Chambers seized America's conscience by proclaiming the transcendence of what apologetic writers now refer to as Judeo-Christian civilization, and exposing thereby what Julien Benda called the *trahison des clercs*—the betrayal by the intellectuals, if we can so dignify the media and the establishment—in the eternal contest for men's souls. Few now realize how he inspirited conservatives (or, as he classified them, the men of the right) in the political battles of the 60's, 70's, and 80's. History must give him this. He was *sui generis*, which may have been the core also of Isaiah's greatness: a greatness that Bill Buckley and I—though perhaps not Sam Tanenhaus—can presume to understand.

Next Year, Drought

by Timothy Murphy

I. The Frozen Flood

The blizzard hurtles southward
on a river swirling north,
and our oldest farmers say
the Red is not the strongest,
the longest or the broadest
but by God it's the coldest
meanest river in the world.

II. Symphony of a Thousand

I'm listening to Mahler
while students fight all night
to raise the city's dikes.
Decorate them for valor
whether we stand or not
when the crescendo strikes.

III. Going Under

Fargo's victims are weeping
for the people of Grand Forks.
Our steeple bells are pealing
and our believers kneeling,
but nothing stops the seeping,
not Christ or all His clerks.

IV. The Recovery

Thanks for drains and sumps,
for six-inch diesel pumps
and concrete septic tanks,
for neighbors closing ranks
to overcome the flood.
Thanks for our forebears' blood
which still runs in our veins
as rivers vein these plains.

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Retooling the Conservative Movement

by James Thornton

Revolution from the Middle
by Samuel Francis
Raleigh: Middle American Press; 251 pp., $6.95

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Samuel Francis's newest book, composed of 30 essays originally published in *Chronicles* between 1989 and 1996, is much more than a collection of articles about matters of passing concern. Rather it attests to Francis's singular efforts in constructing a strategy by which Americans might recapture their nation from the decadent establishment now in power. He does this by challenging that world of comfortable delusion and naiveté that has come to characterize conservative thought, and by calling our attention to the fact that, if we are to prevail, we must comprehend what American civilization was and is, and to consider what we wish it to become. In other words, to formulate a successful strategy we must begin to think sociologically.

We do well to ignore the petty ideological scribblers who dominate sociology today and to remember instead the true sociological luminaries of the last two centuries. In the realm of modern political theory Vilfredo Pareto, Roberto Michels, and Gaetano Mosca must be ranked among the great masters. Yet their books are neither easy to find nor to read. Happily, the central themes encompassed in the works of these authors were epitomized and synthesized over 50 years ago by James Burnham in *The Machiavellians*, a genuine classic that even today remains in print.

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A leitmotiv running through the works of these men is the notion that all human societies have been governed by elites. Whatever the system, from tribal chiefdoms to complex federal republics, governance will be carried out by an elite of one sort or another: a function of the truth that all people are not equally clever or courageous. Marxists, Pareto takes pains to point out, may bluster about the rights of the downtrodden masses, but the practical effect of their theories, insofar as the relationship between rulers and the ruled is concerned, is merely to substitute one hierarchical system with another. To note that governance is always under the direction of an elite and that all societies from the greatest to the most humble are organized along hierarchical lines, is obviously not to say that all elites execute their roles with equal deftness. History testifies that some elites maintained power for centuries and, in the process, brought happiness and prosperity to the peoples and nations commended to their care. Others, like the Bolsheviks, brought only bottomless desolation to their hapless subjects.

Our own current ruling elite, in power for most of this century, is of a definitely leftist temper, sharing certain of its ideological assumptions and many of its more grotesque hallucinations with its Bolshevik cousins. While it has, by and large, eschewed the use of naked terror (at least until recently), it is surely no exaggeration to say that it has spawned considerable misery and catastrophe, both at home and abroad. As Burnham notes, "The programs which [the members of the governing elite] profess, as well as those upon which they act, are devoid of reality in their failure to recognize the general pattern of our age. They are content not simply with myths, but with remnants of outworn myths. Proceeding in this manner, with the material resources devised by physical science at their disposal, they have brought civilization to the most shattering crisis of recorded history." Indeed. So why are they still exercising power?

As a student of the work of Mosca, Michels, Pareto, and Burnham, Samuel Francis knows the source of modern liberalism's success. Liberals understand, for example—especially after some painful lessons in this century—that to maintain control they must possess certain crucial centers of power, and so they have striven relentlessly to gain dominion not only over government but over the cultural organs of our society: churches, educational institutions, the arts, and the mass media. The necessity to control these cultural instrumentalities, though possibly instinctive on the part of the American establishment, was actually set down in a hypothetical framework by another brilliant theorist with keen sociological insights, the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, with whose writings Francis is also thoroughly familiar.

Christianity, Gramsci deduced, having saturated the civilized world for 2,000 years, remained the dominant philosophical and moral system in Europe and North America, at least through the early decades of this century. So thoroughly integrated into the daily lives, and even the patterns of thought, of nearly everyone—including non-Christians living in these societies—had the Christian system become that it formed an almost impenetrable barrier to the new, revolutionary civilization that the radical left wished to create. Attempts to batter down that barrier generated highly menacing counterrevolutionary forces and were therefore unproductive. For this reason, Gramsci saw, it would be more effective and less risky to undermine the enemy from within; to achieve, through "cultural hegemony," the transformation of society's collective mind from its Christian perspective into one more congenial to Marxism. That precisely is what has been going on in this country for seven decades and, in accelerated form, in the last three. Through his reliance on an understanding of solid historical and sociological reality, rather than on silly mottoes or obdurate ideology, Gramsci succeeded by his influence in casting an ever-advancing shadow over our age.

Our own country—with its distinct people, its culture and traditions derived from Europe, and its unique way of apprehending the world—is governed by a ruling elite which openly seeks its obliteration. They have learned how to manip-

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ulate their power to achieve their ultimate objective. Their only opposition has been a congeries of well-meaning but politically inept and wholly unrealistic rightist groups, politely known as "the conservative movement."

Many of these groups embrace aspects of rightist, conservative, and traditionalist philosophies that today are politically untenable, ranging from the immediate abolition of Social Security and Medicare to proposals for armed rebellion against the federal government. Others are "one-issue" organizations apparently convinced that the salvation of the country is dependent on a constitutional amendment allowing prayer in schools, or outlawing abortion, repealing the income tax, and abolishing the Federal Reserve. Still others are publishing businesses or chat clubs. For the most part, their dearth of insight relegates these groups permanently to the hinterlands of political life. However, drawing on the experience of the Wallace campaigns of the late 60's and early 70's, and enlightened by his study of the great political sociologists, Samuel Francis is able to perceive an approaching political "window of opportunity," which he calls the "Middle American Revolution."

The leaders of the Democratic and Republican parties have transformed themselves, he writes, into unabashed toadies of aggressive Third World immigrants, radical feminists, militant homosexuals, angry blacks, vacuous media celebrities, ruthlessly acquisitive parvenus, and transnational corporations. Meanwhile, Middle Americans are no longer represented by the two major parties, their role having been limited to paying for the socially deleterious programs of the "therapeutic managerial welfare state" and to sacrificing their sons in ever more bizarre foreign ventures. Not only are their interests treated with contempt by the major parties, but Middle Americans are routinely vilified by the very institutions they are forced to support. As Francis perceives, Middle Americans are hectored endlessly and advised that, "your heritage, your literature, your art, your holidays, your religion, your music, your beliefs, your country, and your very skin color are garbage and mere tricks by which you and your class and your race have tyrannized mankind." Let Middle Americans raise their voices in protest and an avalanche of idiotic yet intimidating calumnies and accusations roll down upon their heads: racist, fascist, sexist, homophobic, and so forth.

Yet Middle Americans still constitute a significant majority in this country. Their lack of political influence is partly the result of their failure to grasp the life-or-death nature of the "culture war" now under way, of their failure to recognize that the establishment seeks first to pauperize them and finally, during the next few decades, to eradicate them along with their nation, their culture, and their historical memories. It also comes from the establishment's control over a large segment of organized "conservatism." This includes well-financed foundations and think tanks which have become almost entirely enclaves of Big Government conservatives, of the sort that claims Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, and "Dr." King as among their greatest heroes. The very political organizations which should be the agencies through which Middle America protects its interests and resists annihilation have been kidnapped and neutralized. Conservatism has thus become, as Francis asserts, a "hammer without a head."

Francis contends that if Middle Americans are to master their difficulties, if they are to preserve and restore the nation, culture, way of life, traditions, and polity created by their ancestors, they must be made conscious of the power they possess and be organized effectively, not only in the political sphere but in the cultural one. They must be prepared to articulate in convincing fashion their vision of American culture. That would mean a "long march" through the institutions that are the primary sources of the strength and power of the current ruling elite. In short, the hammer must acquire a head.

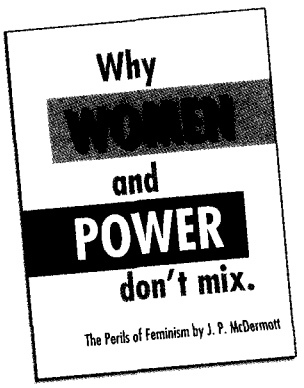
In "Culture and Power: Winning the Culture War," Francis lays out, in elegantly practical terms, a three-point strategy by which this might be accomplished. All that we require, he states, is "the strength and the will and the common purpose to take back our country and our culture." Samuel Francis is a political and sociological realist who points the way, in sober and sensible words, for a true renaissance of American civilization.

Father James Thornton is senior editor of Orthodox Tradition *and a research associate at the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies in Etna, California.*

Explodes the Myth!

J. P. McDermott courageously finds the truth that is at the core of America's most problematic, troubled times.

—Max Gordon



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Gold Cross, Black Helicopters

by Philip Jenkins

Harvest of Rage: Why Oklahoma City is Only the Beginning
by Joel Dyer
Boulder: WestviewPress;
304 pp., $24.00

◆

Maybe in another decade or so we will be ready to assess the full political and psychological impact of the 1995 bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City, but already we can observe some of the major effects. The partisan impact became clear last year, when Bill Clinton's reelection owed so much to the radical shift in the public mood caused by the act: overnight, the torrent of media hostility and suspicion directed against the White House became associated with extremism, conspiracy thinking, and violence. The bombing also reversed American attitudes on domestic terrorism and political violence. After blithely ignoring for 30 years frequent acts of domestic terrorism by various political and ethnic groups, the American media suddenly decided that Oklahoma City was just the tip of a very large iceberg, and 1995 witnessed what we can in retrospect term the Great Militia Panic. Capitalizing on transformed public sentiment, federal agencies have spent the last two years engaged in the tactics of infiltration and provocation which they so regularly used against the left in the 1960's and 70's, with painfully predictable results. Every few months now, we hear astonishing claims that the FBI has once again saved us from the savage onslaught of some militia band—only to learn later that the sole suggestions of violence stemmed from Bureau provocateurs themselves.

Harvest of Rage reflects something of the Militia Panic, in that Joel Dyer sees the attack on the Murrah building as a portent of a cataclysmic revolutionary breakdown: "The bomb's fuse had been lit somewhere in the economically devastated landscape of rural America . . . the people who live in the nation's hinterland have finally reached the edge of the abyss. The fertilizer and diesel fuel that once enriched the soil and powered the machines that plant and harvest will now be used to destroy their perceived enemies, primary among them, the federal government." Throughout this book we must separate such hyperbole from the author's underlying analysis of the social and political situation, which is thoughtful and significant. Even if Oklahoma City *is* the beginning of anything in particular (and that is far from certain), it is very difficult to link the perceived threat with the distinctive problems of rural America, and the structural economic failures collectively known as the farm crisis. Dyer has important things to say about the latter, but the connection to terrorism is tenuous. Readers attracted by the Oklahoma City subtitle will be disappointed; others who would profit from the book's main argument may be put off by its emphasis on "terrorists."

Joel Dyer is a Colorado-based journalist who has worked with community groups seeking to investigate the growing economic and psychic crises of rural America. He argues that these tensions have literally traumatized millions of citizens who have proceeded to respond to desperate circumstances in a series of once unthinkable ways, including suicide and domestic violence. Anomic country-dwellers are ready takers for a variety of conspiracy theories assuming overtly or covertly religious forms, deriving ultimately from familiar notions of the apocalyptic and presenting a lively cast of villains: international bankers and Jewish manipulators, the Beast of the Apocalypse and the Federal Reserve, black helicopters and Soviet tanks, the New World Order and the rise of Antichrist. Sometimes ideas are cemented together by a "Christian Identity" theology, linked to the right-wing anarchism of the Common Law movement. Very commonly, the political framework assumes the betrayal and perversion of the United States Constitution. So far, so good; the strongest parts of *Harvest of Rage* are undoubtedly the case-studies which Dyer presents of farmers and their families adopting some or all of this bizarre intellectual mélange in order to make sense of the disasters wrought upon whole regions and states. Some are members of questionable groups like the Freemen and the Republic of Texas, while others are straightforward individuals. It is helpful to have their ideas explained by a sympathetic populist observer who does not automatically view conspiracy thought as the prerogative of the Nazi or the lunatic, and who sincerely respects the principles of the strict constitutionalist. In this sense, *Harvest of Rage* is a welcome corrective to far more hostile books on the "militia movement" by authors like Kenneth Stern and Morris Dees.

Problems do arise, however, from Dyer's general thesis. First, I am far from certain that the apocalyptic cocktail here described is all that new in rural America. In the 1890's, Midwestern farmers were preparing to defend themselves against the imminent armed onslaught of the Jesuits and the Knights of Columbus, and in the 1930's their fears were wilder still. Second, Dyer asserts—rather than proves—that the attitudes and beliefs he describes have more resonance for rural Americans than for, say, suburbanites, many of whom respond to their fears by moving to the hinterland. Though the survivalist compounds may be in Idaho or Arkansas, they are often populated by uprooted city-dwellers from California or Michigan. Apocalyptic thinking is not necessarily a product of the farm crisis; and the degree of violence is unlikely to be decided by the shifting fortunes of rural America.

Yet Dyer's book offers a heartfelt portrait of conditions in the American farmbelt and fingers the real culprits responsible for its woes: corporate agribusiness, the soulless mandarins of the Federal Reserve system, and the politicians who long ago gave up any pretense of trying to regulate them. If Oklahoma City serves to focus attention on these injustices, then some good may yet come of that disaster.

Philip Jenkins is Distinguished Professor of History and Religious Studies at Penn State University. His most recent books are Hoods and Shirts: The Extreme Right in Pennsylvania 1925-1950 *(University of North Carolina Press) and* A History of the United States *(St. Martin's Press).*

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Principalities & Powers

by Samuel Francis

Looking Backward

A man from Mars visiting the United States at the beginning of 1997 might have thought that the country was wobbling on the brink of political crisis. He would have learned that the White House was occupied by a gentleman immersed in so many scandals that even supermarket tabloids could not keep track of them and that this same gentleman, having been reelected without a majority of voters behind him, faced a Congress controlled by an opposition party sworn to working a revolution in government. Surely the Martian would have lost whatever passes for money on the Red Planet by wagering that the President would soon be thrown out of office, if not into jail, and that his opponents would mount a *coup d'état* that would deliver the state into their hands.

The Martian would have lost his money because nowhere else in the galaxy could he have experienced any political force as inept, incompetent, and worthless as the Republican Party. Throughout the year Republicans in both houses of Congress have lurched and wobbled like a drunken acrobat, ignoring opportunities for weakening the Clinton administration still further and again and again allowing the President to score political points. They allowed major issues like immigration, affirmative action, and activist judges to flop out of their hands and had nothing important to say in criticism of Mr. Clinton's foreign policy—his locking the nation into a continuing and expanded commitment to NATO, his pursuit of global government in one guise or another, or his support for extending Most Favored Nation Status with China. By the end of June, the Martian would have been pining to leave the planet and take himself off to some other, more politically dynamic vista such as the craters of the Moon.

To be fair, the death of politics in the United States—not only this year but for the last several years, despite the "Republican Revolution" of 1994—is not entirely the fault of the Grand Old Party itself. There are few real political issues in the United States today because there are few real political divisions within the Ruling Class, of which the leaders of both political parties are members in good standing, and there are few political divisions within the Ruling Class because at last that class has consolidated its power to the point that there is very little left for its members to argue about. Republicans and Democrats may bicker over the budget and quibble over nominations and electoral questions, but on the main architecture of the leviathan state and the functions and services it provides they have no quarrel. That much was evident in the presidential election last year, when both candidates had to puff and wheeze to fabricate something to debate over, but the ensuing tedium of the presidential race was not simply the result of the lackluster personalities involved but rather of a more far-reaching and underlying crystallization of the national power structure that they both represent.

As I have often indicated before, elites are not bad things in themselves, and whether you like them or not, they happen to be inevitable in human society. The relevant issue for people who don't like a particular elite or ruling class is not how to get rid of it and get along without any social and political hierarchy, but rather how to get yourself another elite that is more suited to your preferences—that is, to your social interests. With the emergence of the Populist Right in the last few years and its Middle American following, there is the prospect, remote as it may seem, that an alternative elite is already beginning to form that will eventually be able to challenge and replace the incumbent dominant class.

I have also indicated before that the most accurate analysis of the incumbent ruling class remains James Burnham's theory of the managerial revolution, a theory formulated in 1941 and often pulverized by academic sociologists and economists, but a theory also which keeps coming back, in one form or another, to provide—after a dozen other analyses and theories—the most reliable depiction of the realities of power in 20th-century America. Just last year, Burnham's theory of the managerial revolution came back yet again in a new book that revives and restates it.

The book, *America's New Economic Order* by neo-Marxist economist Donald Clark Hodges, is dedicated to Burnham, who was Hodges' teacher at New York University in the 1940's, and, despite certain flawed assumptions and analyses in Professor Hodges' Marxist formulations, it is of some importance not only as a reminder of the enduring truths that Burnham discovered about American society but also for certain new insights that Mr. Hodges brings to it.

The Burnham theory, crafted just as Burnham was defecting from Trotskyism, held that a new kind of economy and society was evolving in the United States, as well as in Nazi Germany and Communist Russia, that was neither capitalist nor socialist. The new society was what he called "managerial," and it consisted essentially in the seizure of control of the largest corporations by their managers from their stockholders. The argument was that the managers—meaning those professionals equipped with the technical and managerial skills to run the advanced economy that the corporations dominated—were evolving into a new class that would replace the "capitalists" or stockholders because the capitalists simply did not have the skills to run their own companies.

As an ex-Marxist himself, Burnham then believed that control of the economic power of the corporations was by itself sufficient to determine the structure of a new ruling class, but he also extended the concept of "manager" to state bureaucrats. Like corporate managers, the munchkins of the emerging leviathan state did not hold formal rights of ownership to their offices, but they did have the technical skills to make their offices function. Those who did have a formal "right" to their offices—the citizens who "own" the government and the officeholders they periodically elect to office—in reality exercised no more real control of the state than petty stockholders did over corporate assets and operations. Thus, the managers in the economy joined with their cousins, the managers of the state, to coalesce into a new ruling class. Unlike the old capitalist or bourgeois class, the new class did not depend for its power and position on rights of property and ownership or on classical democratic-republican and con-

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stitutional principles, and hence it had no vested interest in preserving or respecting those formalities.

What it did have an interest in was preserving the structures of the advanced economy, the mass state, and the functions they performed, because only so long as the economy and the state depended on the technical skills necessary to their functioning would they also need the managers. The overriding interest of the managerial class, then, was first to get rid of the remnants of "bourgeois" society (in the form of the limited, neutralist, minimalist state and its slogan of the "rule of law"), of the smaller, entrepreneurial forms of business that were not so technical that their owners could not operate them without managerial expertise, and of the cultural and social framework in which the bourgeois elites flourished; then to advance and perpetuate the structures—like the corporation and the mass state—that allowed a dominant place for the managers themselves; and finally to construct a new cultural and social framework that would legitimate their dominance of society.

The managerial class, of course, did not gain power all at once, and throughout most of the 20th century, using the ideology of what came to be known as "liberalism," it competed on a political and cultural level with its rival, the bourgeois or capitalist class (especially in smaller owner-managed and family firms), which wrapped itself and its interests and values in what came to be known as "conservatism."

Mr. Hodges' new book largely accepts this theory, and in doing so he parts company with most of his fellow Marxists, who have never liked Burnham's analysis. He correctly sees that John Kenneth Galbraith's "New Industrial State" is mainly a reformulated version of Burnham's theory and that what Galbraith called the "technostructure" of the corporation is largely identical to what Burnham had called the "managerial class." Unlike Burnham in his more mature writings, however, Mr. Hodges seems to have remained a fairly conventional economic determinist, and he argues that the corporate managers or technostructure has simply captured the state—not, as Burnham came to see, that the state has evolved its own technostructure that weds or fuses with its corporate siblings.

Mr. Hodges believes that what the managerial revolution represents is in fact the triumph of socialism—what he calls "managerial socialism." Socialism triumphed, in his usage, not because the state expropriated the capitalists or owners but because the managers themselves did so, and the managers' lack of dependence on property and profit (as opposed to corporate growth) means that they have no fear of the state. On the contrary, they rely on the state for subsidies, fiscal privileges, bailouts, government contracts, and various policy postures that benefit managerial as opposed to entrepreneurial structures.

Mr. Hodges also reviews the intellectual history of managerialism in the United States, tracing it back to Edward Bellamy's utopian novel, *Looking Backward*, which described an emerging public economy similar to what Burnham later predicted, and showing how various theorists of the early 20th century like Frederick Winslow Taylor, John Dewey, Elton Mayo, Thorstein Veblen, and Simon Patten, among others, shaped the managerial regime that evolved. These writers collectively provided a theoretical framework for the new managerial class that offered instruction on what to do with the mass or nonelite population. That framework envisaged a population stripped of its social and cultural institutions and values and administratively assimilated into the new social patterns imposed by the new class. Patten, for example, "the father of consumerism," argued that "expanding consumption would compensate the worker for necessary drudgery and keep him on the job."

As Hodges points out, what Patten called "welfare management" meant "a revival of the ancient Roman program, of 'Bread and Circuses.' . . . By amusing the underlying population, they would contribute to pacifying it," and "acceptance of both the political and economic systems in America was obtained by fraud rather than by force."

Mr. Hodges' book is a useful restatement of the Burnham thesis and shows that the theory remains valid despite the heap of criticism and even vilification that has been piled upon it. Yet he might have carried it further by discussing how the managerial class dismantles bourgeois and premanagerial culture and social institutions and generates new ones suitable to its own interests.

Because their power and positions depend upon their own acquisition of technical and managerial skills, the managers are unable to emulate ruling classes of the past by creating hereditary structures that can pass their power on to their heirs. Hence, institutions like the family cease to be important to them as power bases, and managerial culture has tended to disintegrate and delegitimize the family structures through law, social policy, and continuous ridicule. Nor do the managers need or want any of the institutions and social identities of premanagerial civilization in religion, nationality, community, race and ethnicity, or morals. What they demand is centralization and uniformity, which offer blank slates on which their own power and interests can be carved.

Hence, in place of traditional educational institutions, they create mass universities centered around the scientific and social science curricula that provide training in the skills of the new elite and adapt the educational institutions to the managerial need for the destruction of traditional culture and beliefs. Universities and educational institutions in general, then, under the managerial regime, are not places for acquiring education in the traditional sense but rather factories for the reproduction and perpetuation of the elite itself and its ideological legitimization.

It is possible to quibble with both Burnham's original formulation of the theory of the managerial revolution and with Mr. Hodges' reformulation of it, but the theory as a whole explains a great deal about the politics and the cultural history of 20th-century America. Among other things, it helps explain why the American ruling class commits itself to such seemingly suicidal and antisocial behavior as its war on the family, nation, race, and religion (the war is not a sign of decadence but rather of the social needs and interests of an elite that views these social identities as obstacles to its power) and why conservatism has been such a flop (it has ceased to represent a social and political force that can compete effectively with its managerial rivals). Most of all, it helps explain why American politics is so sterile, and why neither the "liberal" nor the "conservative" shade of the political spectrum has any serious quarrel or disagreement with the other side. When politics becomes interesting again, it will be a sign that someone or something other than the ruling class is beginning to reach for the power that the managers have all but monopolized.

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Letter From Nueva York

by Robert Berman

The Elite of El Bronx

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The Hispanic elite have decided that the best way to control the lives of millions of Latin immigrants and illegal aliens flooding into America's cities is to prevent them from learning English. The elites can then preside over a separate, parallel "Hispanic Nation," full of angry, illiterate victims of "white racism."

Recent developments at the City University of New York (CUNY) reveal the nature of "bilingualism" as the best method yet devised to *prevent* students from learning English. While eight of CUNY's 17 two- and four-year colleges have English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, Hostos, Bronx, and Kingsborough community colleges have "bilingual" programs. However, Hostos is unique in having been founded in 1970 as a "bilingual" (read: English-free) college.

A Bronx-based bastion of Puerto Rican separatism, Hostos Community College became a cause célèbre this May, when students boycotted the English Writing Assessment Test (WAT), a graduation requirement at all CUNY colleges. It seems that the passing rate for the WAT had dropped from 20 percent in 1995 to 12.8 last year. The boycotters complained that the test was too hard, and had too much influence on their final grade. After all, their professors were giving their class work passing grades. Why were strange professors grading the exams? One student explained to a reporter that she "knew" English, just not how to speak or write it. Backing her students, President Issaura Santiago-Santiago decreed that Hostos would go its own way, and no longer require the WAT. But CUNY Chancellor W. Ann Reynolds, besieged by a disgusted public, mocked by editorial writers at the *Daily News* ("Tutor U.") and *New York Post*, and pressured by Mayor Giuliani and Governor Pataki to raise achievement levels, instructed Santiago otherwise.

Actually, Hostos had already instituted its own, dumbed-down version of WAT. But because only 15 percent of her students could even pass this exam, Santiago changed the house rules to make the new test account for only 30 percent of a student's final grade, thus enabling a student to graduate despite flunking the exam. An Hostos instructor told me that the school had already illegally graduated students who had never passed their English classes.

In the men's rooms, signs request *"Este es su bano, Favor, Mantener limpio."* Hostos' halls, elevators, and many of its classrooms ring exclusively with the sound of Spanish. Full-time positions are divided among well-to-do Hispanics, white feminists, and blacks, few of whom attended CUNY. Posters celebrating "Racial Justice Day" depict two white cops beating a prostrate, faceless "minority" with nightsticks, while trumpeting *¡Sin justicia, no hay paz!* (No justice, no peace!). School documents abound in improper English: "All things considered. what is you overall rating for this courses?"

In The Bronx, Hostos is called *"la fabrica"* (the factory), though *"el prisión"* might be more apt. Its predominantly female immigrant and Puerto Rican migrant students take language and social science courses in Spanish. (Separatist professors insist to bewildered students that studying Spanish will help their English grammar.) Many instructors in Hostos' ESL classes assign no homework at all, or do not correct what they do assign. Professors and administrators champion belligerents who consider the requirement to speak English in English class a sign of "disrespect." Serious students complain of their classmates, "They just here for the money." Hostos' two-year graduation rate is *.4 percent*. That's right: only *four* out of 1,000 Hostos students graduate after two years with an Associate's degree.

To CUNY's multicultural professoriate, liberal Republican Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and upstate conservative Governor George Pataki are indistinguishable. Backed by the *Village Voice*, activists blamed New York police for "instigating" the March 1995 City Hall riot over the CUNY budget. At the scene, however, I observed disciplined officers arresting bottle-throwing students egged on in part by the "role model" professors who had canceled classes to "show solidarity" with them.

Two-thirds of Hostos' 4,700 students are reportedly on welfare. When Mayor Giuliani insisted that students on the dole work 26, then only 20 hours a week for the city, CUNY officials were outraged that recipients should have to work at all, and demanded that all "workfare" jobs be at students' schools. Giuliani suspects that students would be allowed to study while at "show-no" campus jobs. New York's City Council supports allowing campuses to determine workfare assignments, effectively eliminating the work requirement. Also winning him no friends at CUNY, Governor Pataki's plan to reduce the "double-dipping" of Federal Pell and New York State Tuition Assistance Plan grants would have cost 66,000 of CUNY's projected 215,000 (1996-97) students up to $1,000 per year, saving the state over $44 million. But a State Assembly suffering election-year jitters overrode the governor last year.

Community college students at Hostos, Bronx, and Kingsborough already get full credit for classes taken in Spanish, most of which look the same as English-language courses on their transcripts. The CUNY ESL Council puts ESL classes on a par with foreign language classes, proposing that students receive academic credit for such classes. The spring 1994 "Report of the CUNY ESL Task Force" emphasized that immigrants did better academically than their American-born CUNY classmates, as if this were good news. The American-born students in question often function on a *grade-school* level. ESL officials note in private that a rising percentage of Latin students are illiterate *in Spanish*. Spanish-language courses are given by Hispanic instructors whose loyalty to Hispanic students often compromises their grading.

In fact, many of Hostos' ESL instructors illegally coach their students with the exam questions in advance, thus invalidating the results. Many students even write their essays in advance, or hire them out, and copy them from crib sheets. And yet, as a veteran ESL professor who coaches her students reports, 50

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percent of her students still manage to fail her class.

To gauge the impact of "bilingualism," consider the following, complete essay written in a "college-level" class at Bronx Community College by a Dominican-born, New York high school graduate:

> I am going to college, to learn a profession for my future, My major is computer Science. In this moments is difficult, to someone get a good job. It is Important. you go to school to learn, because you finish major. After that do you get a good job, in Important company. They pay a lot money, do you could a position in the society and every do you Want. for that I am going to college.

Sue Dicker, Hostos' director of ESL placement, argues that immersion wrongly gives pride of place to the "majority" language, to the detriment of "minority" (read: foreign) languages. Incredibly, Dicker claims that immersion programs seek to *eliminate* students' first language. Imagine the response in the Dominican Republic, if English-language advocates demanded an end to the dominance of Spanish! Considering that polyglot countries (e.g., India) have survived only by forcing all groups to learn a common language, the multicultural defense of minority sovereignty is a case of backdoor colonialism.

In the fall of 1995, Spanish-born Hostos professor Rose Aruffat distributed in the English Department a portion of an essay that attacked conservatives who rejected "any suggestion to expand and reorient bilingual education programs to promote bilingual students' literacy skills in their primary language" and who opposed the "expansion of bilingual education [that] would transfer status and power (as well as jobs) to minority groups who have the linguistic and cultural abilities to work in such programs." Note the second-class role the writer envisions for English. For separatists, "bilinguals" is a code word for "Hispanics." Thus, a candidate illiterate in English *and* Spanish, but who has a Hispanic surname, would have a better chance of landing a "bilingual" job than a non-Hispanic white fluent in both languages.

Despite millions of successful cases, CUNY's ESL Council insists "there is no evidence" that immersion works. The Council's crusade against CUNY's vastly cheaper and more effective language Immersion Institutes, which opened in October 1995, anticipates the loss of untold millions of dollars in patronage jobs and student aid checks, and the loss of "hate control."

Why should American taxpayers support students lacking any intellectual promise, much less immigrants (or illegal aliens) learning a foreign language? How could students have received American high school diplomas, whether in Puerto Rico or New York, without knowing English? Why are *colleges* being used to teach ESL?

No other country recognizes a right to university matriculation (or to financial aid, for that matter) for illiterate immigrants. When we spoke last July, CUNY spokeswoman Rita Rodin was extremely defensive: "You can't compare [CUNY] with other systems. There are many different factors. You have to allow for the different starting points." Such caveats could invalidate all grading and testing, and justify unlimited financial aid.

Hostos was the scene of a near riot on February 26, as student and staff goons loyal to President Santiago menaced faculty supporters of Dean of Faculty Carlos Acevedo, whom Santiago had suddenly fired. Acevedo's supporters claimed that Santiago had scapegoated him for the failures of Hostos' bilingual pedagogy, which both sides supported. Another bilingualism supporter, Bronx County Democratic chairman Roberto "Bobby" Ramirez, anticipates "the day, when a New York city mayor speaks Spanish." Resenting Ramirez' Bronx machine, a naturalized Dominican student flying through paralegal studies at Bronx Community College intends to sign up as Republicans as many of his conservative Catholic and Pentecostal fellow countrymen as possible.

There was a time when a large chunk of CUNY's professors were City College alumni. Now, but a few relics remain. A Puerto Rican City College graduate recalls with a wan smile the aristocratic Puerto Rican professor she admired during the 1950's. "She said that after the revolution, she would be the minister of education. . . . Thirty years ago, I supported the civil rights movement. Now, I regret it."

Robert Berman is a teacher and freelance writer in New York.

Letter From England

by Jeremy Black

Why Johnny Bull Can't Read

◆

Education has long been a political hot potato in Britain. For decades it has been the central issue that links national politics to the politics of the localities, the politics of class, and the politics of party. This might appear surprising in a society where over 90 percent of schoolchildren are educated in government schools, where the government controls the parameters within which private schools operate, and where there is only one private university.

In short, the state has won the battle for control of British education. Yet, this triumph has been a hollow one; the state has taken over educational provision only to find the resulting system become a source of acute dissatisfaction.

The nationalization of education was a long-term process that reflected the extension of the welfare state. The 1870 Education Act divided the country into school districts and required a certain level of education, introducing the school district in areas where existing parish provision was inadequate. The Education Act of 1918 designated 14 as the minimum age for quitting school. The Education Act of 1944 obliged every local authority to prepare a development plan for educational provision, and the Ministry of Education imposed new minimum standards in matters such as school accommodation and size.

This state control of education also put an end to the streamlining of children by ability into different schools after examination at the age of 11 (12 in Scotland). Grammar and secondary schools were replaced by comprehensive schools, a policy actively supported by the Labour government (1964-70) and further, although with less zeal, implemented under its Conservative successor (1970-74). Motivated in part by class hatred or guilt, Labour politicians regarded grammar schools as elitist and favored a more egalitarian approach. Another major shift was away from single-sex and toward mixed schooling. This was a

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change that took place without consultation, and that reflected the views of politically partisan "experts."

In addition, major expansions in higher education since the 1960's have dramatically increased the number of students and thus the graduate population as well. The number of college students from lower-income families rose considerably; nine new universities were founded between 1958-66; and the number and importance of polytechnics increased. The Robbins Report of 1963 recommended higher education for *all* qualified candidates, and the government responded. Students were also given free tuition, and subsidies in proportion to their parental income. The percentage of 18-year-olds entering a university in the United Kingdom rose from 4.6 in 1961 to over 30 by the mid-1990's, by which time the polytechnics and other colleges had become universities.

These shifts in education reflected the socialization of British society and a cult of egalitarianism that is hostile to past practices and antagonistic to anything termed elitist. Educational reform became the left-wing, statist panacea of the 1960's and 70's, and so when Tony Blair (like Bill Clinton) makes education the ideological centerpiece of his government today, he is using widespread popular concern with educational standards to win support for more national planning. Part of the skill of both Clinton and Blair has been to transform the politics of the left from the redistribution of wealth, which is increasingly unpopular in societies made prosperous by capitalism, to policies that can tap middle-class aspirations. In essence, Blair and Clinton seek to unite the middle class and the state, and to convert both to the objectives of a transformed left. This is a far more insidious threat to conservatism than the politics of working-class identity and the traditional focus of the left. But, again, part of the skill of Blair and Clinton is that they have retained most of the old constituency.

The sentiments expressed by advocates of educational change in Britain, like their American counterparts, were and are often ugly, divisive, and self-righteous, but, more to the point, their policies do not work, either educationally or socially. Despite decades of expenditure, many British pupils continue to leave school without a secure grasp of words or numbers, which is especially troubling in an economy with few opportunities for functional illiterates, whether in industry, farming, forestry, mining, or the armed forces. The level of educational attainment by the remainder of the school population leaves much to be desired. It is particularly ironic that language skills declined as Britain became steadily more absorbed into the European Union. In 1991-92, British schools taught an average of only 0.9 languages per pupil, which ranks at the bottom of the European Union (only Portugal is worse in this regard). French is the most common foreign language studied in Britain's secondary schools, but it was studied by only 59 percent of pupils in 1991-92; German was next at 20 percent. The comparable percentages in Ireland were 69 and 24. Indeed, according to many indicators, British schoolchildren do worse than their Continental counterparts.

State education also failed to fulfill the hopes of its supporters in the social sphere. Rising levels of crime and violence among schoolchildren, often *at* school, caused a public storm in 1996 when a London headmaster was stabbed to death after intervening in a brawl at the school gates. Teachers have refused to teach the increasing number of violent children—more evidence of the failure of the state system to act as a civilizing influence. In May 1997, a bright Scottish pupil committed suicide after being taunted for being smart by her dumbed-down classmates.

Nor has national planning made Britain a more egalitarian society, despite decades of national control of education. Instead, social class is now in part defined by room size, and in 1996 Tony Blair's choice of a particular state school for one of his kids led to controversy. Proximity to desirable state schools features prominently in housing sales, increasing property prices and altering the social and economic topographies of cities; attempts by educational authorities to alter school districts evoke fierce protests. Far from *abolishing* social divisions, then, government intervention in education has actually exacerbated them. "Leveling" has been seen as "leveling down," something to be avoided even by those who do not seek social mobility.

Furthermore, hostility to what is perceived as elitism has been used to serve tendentious causes. For example, the current Labour government—Blair and his allies, many of them unelected "political advisors" who interfere in the Civil Service and further politicize government—with an overwhelming parliamentary majority that claims the mandate of popular support on the basis of less than half of the votes cast, uses anti-elitism as a means to typecast its opponents and oppose their viewpoints. Take Labour's criticism of the hereditary peerage; although the remnants of the traditional *ancien régime* elite, hereditary peerage received fresh transfusions of merit thereafter, in the shape of new hereditary peers. In May 1997, shortly after its election, the Blair government began criticizing the socio-educational character of another autonomous and potentially hostile group, the judiciary. It was presented as overwhelmingly composed of men and the products of private schools, which to Labour signifies a necessarily anachronistic and reactionary force; indeed, all of the 26 judges appointed in 1993-94 had been to private schools and only three were women. This pattern is also found in the senators of the College of Justice in Scotland.

Tony Blair, himself, is the product of a distinguished private school and of Oxford University, both institutions being highly selective. But hypocrisy has been a central aspect of Labour's triumph, and characteristic of Blair. Blair's self-righteousness, combined with these attacks on other socio-educational groups, gives *carte blanche* to the new Labour elite. Their background is different from traditional Labour leaders, who emphasize trade and unionism. Instead, this is a leadership of affluence and social mobility, not socialism. The language of equality serves to foster opportunity for the few, not the many: the traditional left-wing criticism of conservatives can now be directed against the leadership of the left.

The left of the 1990's seeks not the nationalization of the productive economy but a takeover of the institutional fabric and administrative structures of the country. To achieve these goals it uses education as a weapon, to condemn potential opponents and to create a world that matches its ideology and interests. Inevitably in an over-centralized state, the rest of the population has to pay for this agenda.

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EDUCATION

The Forced Funding of Student Radicalism

by Scott Southworth

I happen to be a conservative, a Christian, and white. I am also in the military, and I disapprove of homosexuality. At the University of Wisconsin, there is little tolerance for this combination of characteristics. As a student there, I served as the symbol of all that's wrong with the world. My checkbook showed just the opposite, however: I supported the International Socialist Organization, the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Campus Center, the abortion advocacy of the Women's Center, and the radical environmentalism of the UW-Greens (offspring of Ralph Nader's Green Party). With my money, the left endured with a virulence well known at most public universities.

To any outsider—especially anyone who knows my political and ideological beliefs—my support appears ridiculous. It was. However, it was not due to some gut-level feeling of "political correctness" or "multiculturalism" on my part. This support was coerced. The price for noncompliance? No grades; no graduation.

During my four years of undergraduate study and one semester of law school at the university, I had again and again expressed my outrage at the university policy of utilizing mandatory student fees to fund the political and ideological advocacy of private student groups. Finally, another law student, and one of my best friends, Keith Bannach, told me about a Christian legal foundation named the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF). He encouraged me to contact them about filing a lawsuit, and I finally did so in February 1995. I learned from Scott Phillips, the executive director of the ADF, that his organization did not represent people but rather funded worthy cases approved by a board of directors after the attorney on the case sent in an application for funding. However, he gave me the name of a Christian attorney from Fairfax, Virginia, who had successfully applied for funding in the past. His name was Jordan Lorence.

I called Jordan immediately, and he agreed to take the case. The Alliance Defense Fund agreed soon thereafter to full funding. It was my job, as a quasi-expert on the mechanism for funding these groups, to figure out a way to explain the university's system to him. I had helped shut down a previous student government during my last year as an undergraduate, and had fought the implementation of the new, similarly structured student government that had formed under the helping hand of the university administration.

The University of Wisconsin operates under two large financial pools of money: tuition and student fees. Tuition pays for the professors' salaries, most university buildings, the maintenance of the lawns, the infrastructure, etc. Student fees fund a variety of services, and are divided into two small but separate pools of money: allocable and nonallocable. The nonallocable fees fund the Health Services, the recreational facilities, and the student unions. Like tuition, students have no control over the amount or recipient of these funds. The pool of allocable fees—totaling nearly $500,000—is reserved for the student "government," which can spend as it wishes, pending approval by university officials.

Both student governments that existed during my study at the university served their leftist clients well by funneling cash to many radical groups. To mask their cash cow, however, they also passed a few dollars on to nonpolitical or ideological activities (e.g., a bus service on campus). Additionally, the student government and the administration employed two well-known tactics to avoid any questions from would-be dissenters: secrecy and extensive bureaucracy. When a student (or parent) received the "Fee/Tuition" bill, no explanation followed as to what "fee" meant. No delineation existed on the bill to warn students and parents that their money funded radical agendas. In fact, if students wanted to find out where the "fees" went, they would have to query the administration, which sends out a nondescript list of all the allocable and nonallocable funds which make up student "fees." It does not, however, alert anyone to many of the actual activities funded by these thousands of dollars.

If a student wished to see a breakdown of the individual allocable funds, he or she would have to contact the office of the student government. This office would then provide information that explains that student groups receive funding from two different allocable funds, distributed either by a committee of the student government or directly from the government itself, and that student groups could also receive funding via a student referendum. Each funding mechanism, of course, had its own application procedures and rules, etc., etc. Additionally, the Chancellor and Board of Regents would have to stamp their approval on all funding, and student groups receiving funds could only operate under certain guidelines. Needless to say, the system brilliantly confused or frustrated most detractors from proceeding past the inquiry stage. Since the administration abounds with leftists who agree wholeheartedly with the radical agenda of the student government, no whistleblowing had occurred to stop the practice.

To explain all of this to my attorney, I prepared what I affectionately term the "initial binder." After studying this for some time, he agreed that the university's policy was an unconstitutional burden on students studying at the UW, but felt that we should offer the Board of Regents a way out without a lawsuit. He then wrote a courteous letter to the president of the board in November 1995, explaining the law and the policy. We never received a reply.

By early 1996, it became clear that a lawsuit was imminent. Amy Shoepke, a first-year law student and former UW undergraduate, joined in the process of developing the lawsuit, as did Keith Bannach. With our attorney, we embarked on evidence gathering. We collected

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voter guides from the campus environmentalists, "abortion rights" advocacy from the university's Women's Center, pornographic pictures and sexually explicit literature from the resident pro-homosexual organizations, and even a videotape of a protest at which the International Socialist Organization helped to disrupt a talk (at a local church) opposing homosexuality. With this mountain of previously unexposed evidence, we filed the suit on April 2, 1996, in federal district court.

Our allegations that the university violated our rights to freedom of speech, freedom of association, and the free exercise of our religious beliefs were rebuked by the university and those organizations which received funding. Name-calling ensued. Three ACLU supporters labeled us "bigots" in a letter to a campus newspaper. Many students verbally attacked Amy in the law school, and I had a meeting with the dean to discuss our physical safety on campus.

The fall of 1996 found us engaged in depositions, evidence collection, and brief writing, and by early October 1996, all of the briefs lay on the desk of Judge John Shabaz. Both sides knew that no trial would be necessary, since no material facts were in dispute. The legal opinion of the judge, in the form of a "summary judgment," would provide the decision we needed. In the brief supporting its motion for summary judgment, the university argued that its educational mission included the funding of student advocacy. We countered that the university's mission could not extend so far as to violate students' First Amendment rights.

On November 29, 1996, Judge Shabaz granted our motion for summary judgment. Noting that the university compelled students to fund the advocacy of private political and ideological groups, he held the system unconstitutional as a violation of the First Amendment rights to freedom of speech and association. Since the system stood as unconstitutional on these grounds, he did not reach a ruling on the free exercise claims.

Not surprisingly, the university appealed in mid-December to the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals, which holds jurisdiction over Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana. Though the leftists on campus lauded the decision to appeal, they were not alone. We also approved of the decision, because a circuit opinion not only carries more weight but also affects a larger group of would-be defendants (namely, the University of Illinois and the University of Indiana).

Legal theories become much more important than facts at the appellate level. Jordan taught me this well, and in late February he called me to discuss a new legal theory that he had developed for the case—one that combined two seemingly dichotomous lines of cases created over decades of litigation in the United States Supreme Court.

The first line of cases we call the *Abood-Keller*. *Abood* and *Keller* involved the payment of dues to a union and a bar association, respectively. The California Supreme Court, in a case involving the mandatory student fee at the University of California, summarized the principles of these cases: "*Keller* and *Abood* teach that the state may compel a person to support an organization if there is a sufficiently compelling reason to do so, and that the organization's use of mandatory contributions must be germane to the purposes that justified the requirement of support." In other words, unions and bar associations cannot compel members to fund nongermane advocacy.

The second line of cases, the *Widmar-Rosenberger*, involve the concept of the "open forum" on university campuses. *Widmar* held that the university could not deny access to the physical forum created by the university (classrooms, kiosks, etc.) because of a student group's ideology. *Rosenberger* (decided in June 1995) held that the university could not deny a group access to the pool of money created through student fees (a metaphysical forum). Of course, there is a difference between the physical and metaphysical forums; namely, the physical forums have primary purposes other than subsidizing the advocacy of any particular group.

Though both lines of cases stood alone, what the United States Supreme Court had not yet decided was the issue we presented: What to do when a student does not wish to pay into the metaphysical forum, which directly funds political and ideological advocacy? Justice O'Connor had hinted at this problem in her concurring opinion in *Rosenberger*: "Finally, although the question is not presented here, I note the possibility that the student fee is susceptible to a Free Speech Clause challenged by an objecting student that she should not be compelled to pay for speech with which she disagrees."

Jordan combined both lines of cases to determine that the university has a duty to implement *both* the *Abood-Keller* and the *Widmar-Rosenberger* principles: in other words, the university may not deny access to the physical or metaphysical forums created, but they also cannot compel students to pay into the metaphysical forum against their wishes. In Jordan's words, "No exclusions due to viewpoints, no compulsions due to viewpoints."

This new legal theory recently had its first test at the Seventh Circuit. Arguing on June 4, 1997, Jordan eloquently explained this new theory to a three-judge panel in Chicago. Notwithstanding the logic of our argument, the university insisted that its educational mission lay broadly enough to require compelling the fee. However, Judge Manion, the presiding judge during oral arguments, asked the attorney representing the university if a black student would have to fund a Ku Klux Klan organization, or if a Jewish student would be forced to contribute to a Nazi group. The university responded in the only way it could: "Yes." With that answer, the policy appeared as draconian and unconstitutional as it ever had.

Who defines what is "political" or "ideological"? Each individual. No private school group on campus needs life support from the student government. If an organization cannot survive in the marketplace of ideas, then it deserves dissolution.

We are not arguing that the university does not have an interest in promoting a diversity of opinions. However, even the university understands that promoting an environment where students can express competing viewpoints can only go so far. In fact, university policy excludes all religious groups and both the Democratic and Republican organizations from funding. Of course, the solution to a bad system is not to make it worse. Funding *all* organizations on campus would only serve to increase the number of people suffering a violation of their constitutional rights.

The answer is simple: *stop funding private groups*. We do not oppose an "opt in" system on campus, which would operate much like the Combined Federal Campaign, allowing students to have a certain amount of money added to their fee/tuition bill and then distributed to the groups of their choosing. However, any system which operates to take money from students against their will cannot

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stand against the weight of the First Amendment.

Above all the rhetoric surrounding the university policy, the specific activities of any particular group, or the precedent from the United States Supreme Court, a simple principle remains strong: government coercion in the areas of freedom of speech, freedom of association, and the freedom to exercise one's religious beliefs cannot be tolerated—especially at our public educational institutions. Students must never allow a small group of individuals, utilizing the heavy hand of government, to trample over these rights. They have a right—a duty—to fight any system which compromises the integrity of the First Amendment.

James Madison perfectly addresses government coercion: "Who does not see . . . [t]hat the same authority which can force a citizen to contribute three pence only of his property for the support of any one establishment, may force him to conform to any other establishment in all cases whatsoever?" Under the guise of "diversity," the university forced us to conform to an unethical, unnecessary, and unconstitutional system. We exposed them. We questioned them. We fought them. We won. We pray that we will prevail at the Seventh Circuit as well, thus giving students the right to exercise the freedoms guaranteed by our Constitution.

Scott Southworth recently graduated with honors from the University of Wisconsin Law School.

Homegrown

by Katherine Dalton

This speech was delivered in April at the Webb School, a private secondary school in Knoxville, Tennessee.

I try not to put on airs about what I do for a living. I would never tell you that writing is dignified enough to be called a profession, like being a doctor or an architect. Writing is a trade, or to use a better word, a craft. It does, however, take a lot of work to become any good at it, and while I am not a good writer yet I am getting a little better with practice, and I take comfort in that.

One thing I have learned from making my living writing is that clichés are death. They don't just ruin your prose style. They are rotten shortcuts people use instead of thinking, or to keep others from thinking, or sometimes to lie.

When somebody who is bright enough to speak clearly starts using big clichés, or talking in meaningless sentences, watch out. I will give you an example: When I was an undergraduate at Yale, I ended up party to suit against the university. It was a classic First Amendment case: certain parties at the university were trying to put our magazine out of business because they did not like the articles we printed. It is a long story I will not go into now, but my point is that the first lawyer we hired might as well have been speaking Hindustani to us. He always explained what he was doing in language that was absolutely incomprehensible.

All of us who had brought the suit were very young at the time, students or recent graduates; we were inexperienced, and we thought the problem was with us: we thought we could not understand our lawyer because the law was so complicated and we were so ignorant. But we eventually discovered—and we discovered it the hard way, in briefs and in court—that we could not understand the lawyer because he was not saying anything understandable. He was not competent.

These days one of the biggest clichés around, one of the great buzzwords of the past decade, and one which gets more popular by the minute, is "global"—the global economy, the global village, the global market. I am sure you hear it all the time. Maybe someone has told you that you need to learn computer programming or Chinese in order to prepare for a global career. I can think of perfectly good reasons for doing both of those things, but the globalization of yourself is not one of them.

Yet people are adamant about globalism. They say the world is getting smaller, nobody stays in one place anymore or even one country, the times are changing and we have to change with them. Certainly the way technology and telecommunications have affected our personal and working lives is astonishing. But people who say these things want us to believe that we have little or no power to shape our lives, that we must bow to fate in the form of international trade agreements and transatlantic telecommunications. And really, that is globaloney.

Yes, if a volcano erupts in Hawaii we will see changes in our weather. If Great Britain dumps nuclear waste in the North Sea, it will poison our fishing and our seas. But you do not live in Ukraine anymore than you live in Mexico, or even Washington state. You live in Knoxville. Your character is being shaped by this place and the people in it more than any other place or any other people, whether you like it or not. Your primary ties, and your primary responsibilities, are to the people and the land that you live among here. As Kentucky writer and environmentalist Wendell Berry observed about that beautiful photo of the Earth taken from outer space, and I am paraphrasing: "Look at it. And try to find your neighborhood."

We do not live in the "world." Mostly we live, eat, sleep, shop, go to school, go to church, hang out at the mall, all within a radius of a few square miles. There is no such thing as a global village; that is a phrase with no meaning. A village is a few hundred people living together, not a few billion. In a village you can know everybody. We could not take in all the names and faces and personalities and problems in the world even if we wanted to.

When I first moved to New York in the mid-80's, I found myself making eye contact with most of the people I passed in the street, the way I had always done at home and at school. It seemed strange to me that at the end of my walks I felt emotionally drained. Only after a few months did I realize that I was making eye contact with too many people. It takes a puff of emotional energy to interact with another person even that little bit, and in passing hundreds of people a day I was exhausting myself.

We can loosen or lose old ties and responsibilities—it is not that hard to leave our families behind and move away to a city where nobody knows us. But only within very tight limits can we gain new ones. If I were to move to Paris tomorrow, never in my whole life could I become a Parisian. I would always be a foreigner living in Paris, and no driver's license or new citizenship papers would change that. Even if I moved to Knoxville, at best in 20 or 30 years I could call myself a thoroughly rooted transplant Tennesseean. But still I would always be a Kentuckian. I would still root for UK.

We are local by fact and by necessity—and as far as I am concerned that is a good thing, for a lot of reasons. We do

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not have the emotional makeup or energy or time to care about and be able to take care of more than a few people. You know from your own experience that friendship is work, and that you cannot have 18 best friends. And that does not mean you are a limited person: that means you are a normal person.

There is also the problem of your identity. Being young adults you are fighting to figure out who you are—and it *is* a fight, a fight to respect the wishes and expectations of your parents and grandparents and friends and teachers, but still to know who you are in particular.

Part of what you are is a Knoxvillian, or at least a Tennesseean. I am serious. A kid who has grown up in ten different cities is not from Des Moines *and* Atlanta *and* Portland, Maine. He is from nowhere, and that is not healthy, any more than it is healthy to be an orphan, or to lose your house in a fire. Losing your family or your home will not kill you, but it is a real hurdle, and the same goes for being without a hometown.

And with that privilege of being a Tennesseean comes the responsibility to find out who you are. If you are lucky you have a good Tennessee history course here at Webb, and Tennessee writers are assigned in your English classes. Lacking that, you have the responsibility to find out on your own. Do you know who Donald Davidson and Andrew Lytle are? If you do not, you ought to—they are part of your tradition, and even if you have every intention of rebelling against all tradition, still you ought to know what you are rebelling against.

If I have learned anything from reporting it is that life is so much funnier and stranger and more interesting than anything I or most other people could make up. Those of us from a real place, from places as interesting as Kentucky and Tennessee with all the stories and strengths and oddities we can draw on to define ourselves, have it so much easier than those people who have the burden of needing to choose where they are "from."

And the problem I have with globalism is that it encourages us to give up that advantage. It takes us away from the people who deserve our best energy and attention: our friends and family. None of us is an individual in the sense that we create ourselves out of nothing. We are created by our connections, and taking away those connections does not make us more international, it makes us less ourselves.

If you get out of school and go to work someday for a big corporation, you will find that multinational businesses—global businesses, that is, with plants or distribution centers in many countries—generally demand that their employees move around in order to be promoted.

There is a large multinational manufacturer based in Louisville which has several plants around the United States and abroad. The men and women who are successful here generally move every three years, and not just from Louisville to Connecticut, but from Louisville to Hong Kong. To rise in that organization, you must be willing to take a long-term—let us say two years—international assignment.

To you in high school this might sound great, but remember this is work and not a field trip, and for people with kids in school it is tough. One Louisville employee of this company, a woman whose husband worked and who had young children, was offered an assignment in China and given three days to make her decision, yes or no. That is what the global economy is about; mobile human resources.

It is about mass culture, too, and the end of any ability to amuse ourselves. There is something weird about watching a music video that is played from São Paulo to New York to Liverpool, or eating a certain brand of corn chips along with millions of other snackers, or turning on the World Cup on television rather than cheering for the local Triple A baseball club in person. It is so passive, being a cog in some great global marketing machine.

These days, given how widespread packaged entertainment is and how easy it is to give in passively to mass amusements, anybody who forms her own jazz band, puts on a public rant poetry performance, hangs out with a bunch of skateboarders, or even plays football instead of watching the pros on television is a radical. It is a radical act, to make your own fun instead of buying it—to do something yourself, instead of paying television network executives and advertisers to do it to you.

Packaged and global go together hand in glove, because you cannot make money transporting music or art or theater or sports unless you can persuade people all the way from Lima, Peru, to Peru, Illinois, to have the same taste and buy the same product. Uniqueness, localness, is expensive, inefficient, not cost-effective—it does not sell, and so we are supposed to abandon it.

The same goes for careers, as I have mentioned. Part of the global economy propaganda is an effort to persuade us that we must adapt ourselves to the needs of international business if we intend ever to earn a living. I hope that never becomes true; certainly it is not true yet. If it is important to you to live in a certain place, you can do it.

For me that meant making some

LIBERAL ARTS

LET YOUR FINGERPRINTS DO THE WALKING

According to the *FAIR Immigration Report* in June, the Immigration and Naturalization Service recently admitted that it has no way of carrying out its pledge to revoke the citizenship of immigrants whose criminal history should have made them ineligible to become citizens. The INS has no means of forcing citizens to provide fingerprints, and therefore cannot catch and deport naturalized criminals. Since 1994, those seeking to come to the United States have had the option of submitting their fingerprints by mail, a flaw in the system that allows many criminals to slip into the United States every year. The Clinton administration allegedly ignored this problem in the hope of naturalizing one million immigrants before the November 1996 elections under the "Citizenship USA" program.

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changes in what I did for a living. When I lived in New York, I worked as a staff editor at *Harper's* and *Elle*. Now I am a contributing editor to another magazine called *Chronicles*, long-distance. Moving home several years ago by choice, I was forced to switch from a job that was mostly editing to full-time freelance writing. As it happens, I have exchanged something good for something better, but I would have made the change in any case, so that I could work in the place I wanted to be.

Living in the provinces, as people on the East Coast view Kentucky, even has a certain practical advantage: not only do I have more to say about a part of the world that belongs to me and interests me more than New York City ever did, but while there are hundreds or thousands of freelance writers in New York, there aren't 50 in Kentucky. I will admit, of course, that most magazine editors are a thousand times more interested in New York than Kentucky. But finding a niche is part of the challenge, and if your story is good and you can tell it moderately well, much of the time you can find a publisher.

Your hometown is like your language—you will never be as fluent in another place or another tongue. You will never own or owe another place as much. You will never feel as strong a tie to another state or, heaven knows, another country. Blood is thicker than water, and that is as true of motherlands as of mothers. If you have the good fortune to live in a state where your family has lived for several generations, then its history is your history. You may be nodding through American History class now, but if you knew you had an ancestor at the Civil War battles of Shiloh or Chattanooga, you would wake up, wouldn't you?

Excellence or genius or whatever you want to call "high art" derives from an artist who has command of his medium—paint, words, music. To take a rock-and-roll example, the bands like Soundgarden or Nirvana that created Seattle-style alternative rock would not have been as interesting if, right as they formed, the band members had rented a van and moved to New York. They would not have done squat in New York; New York is such a heavily commercialized rock scene that its talent is producing a marketing phenomenon like Madonna, not original music.

The best music is almost never from New York or L.A. REM and the B52s grew out of Athens, Georgia. Delbert McClinton grew out of the Texas clubs. Leadbelly grew out of an earlier, black Texas and Louisiana tradition, just as zydeco grew out of New Orleans and bluegrass out of western and eastern Kentucky. These musicians developed their voice in the places they were from; and they could create an individual style and sound because they had a tradition and influences to draw on, a base that was human and personal. Only God can make something out of a void. That is why rootless people, weaned on the cultural equivalent of sugarwater, cannot make real music. Just pop.

I am twice as old as most of you. But old as I am I remember very well what I felt in high school. When I was a senior I could not wait to get out of Louisville, to start new somewhere else. In my case I went to Yale in New Haven, a very New England school; I did not want to go south, and I never dreamed of going to college in Kentucky. Since I felt that way I could hardly blame you for feeling the same. I am a localist to the extent of wishing that you would stay in your state or at least in the South, where there are plenty of excellent schools, but I cannot give advice that I myself would never have taken.

And I will say this for going to college and then working up north for several years: it made me appreciate what I had at home, and understand that outside of Kentucky in particular and the South in general, everywhere else is a foreign country. Four years in New Haven could not make me a Yankee any more than four years at Oxford would have made me a Brit. All travel can really do for you, besides entertain you, is to teach you what you are—and then sometimes, something that is just as important: what you are not.

Now please do not get the idea that I am against foreign travel, or foreign exchange students, or foreign languages. Quite the contrary. But I am very much against the notions that the real world is always somewhere else, anywhere but here; and that we should be passive consumers—I hate that word; it implies we are nothing but belly—rather than individuals, citizens, human beings.

Let me end with a few lines from a great Tennesseean—born in Pulaski, educated at Vanderbilt—named John Crowe Ransom. This is the opening paragraph in a book of essays you should be reading and arguing about in your combined American History/American Literature class, a great book, and a book that in parts will probably make you very angry; a book called *I'll Take My Stand*:

> It is out of fashion in these days to look backward rather than forward. About the only American given to it is some unreconstructed Southerner, who persists in his regard for a certain terrain, a certain history, and a certain inherited way of living. He is punished as his crime deserves. He feels himself in the American scene as an anachronism, and knows he is felt by his neighbors to be a reproach.

My friends, may you always be a reproach to your neighbors.

Katherine Dalton writes from Henry County, Kentucky.

LIBERAL ARTS

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

According to the May 25 edition of the London *Sunday Telegraph*, the police in South Africa have formed special units to protect men and women accused of "witchcraft." Following a series of killings in the villages of the Northern Province—143 suspected witches died between April 1994 and February 1995—the village of Helena has become a sanctuary for accused witches who have fled their homes. Black villagers who are "quick to blame any adverse act of fate on black magic" often sever the organs and limbs of their victims, including "the genitals, hands or the head, all of which are believed to bring good luck."

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The Hundredth Meridian

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

South by Southeast

East, east-southeast, southeast: rugged mountains covered by lichenous forests breaking from the red desert floor, sky islands of the American Southwest. San Carlos Lake ahead of the wing, and beyond it the dark mass of the Pinaleno Mountains; southwest, the distant horn of Baboquivari snagging the summer haze. The Chiricahua Mountains crowded the Arizona line and then the plane was into western New Mexico, skirting fields of cumulus clouds above the peaks of the Gila, flying through clear open skies over red deserts. The Burro and Cedar Mountains, the Florida Mountains; Interstate 10 making the bend east of Lordsburg toward Deming. Then—the wing coming up for the northeast turn south of the Organ Mountains—the green corridor of the Rio Grande like a Martian canal across the wilderness: 500 years of civilization hugging the brown river with towns, houses, pecan orchards, and cotton-fields, siphoning its life-force through the thirsty *acequias*. Beyond the river, finally, the bergs and ranges of mysterious Mexico, indistinct in the haze. The plane bumped across the thermals rising above the Franklin Mountains, banked south, and dropped to the runway extending into red sand and mesquite. In a warm cantina at the El Paso International Airport, among booted men in tall black hats, dark-skinned girls, and the flutter of the Spanish tongue, I drank a cold beer to celebrate my arrival in the Southwest.

We turn almost imperceptibly from one thing to the next, becoming in the process nearly something else ourselves. Writers wear things out and use them up. Don Juans by temperament they are typically rough on women, from whom they demand too much while giving too little in return. Yet the Don Juanism of the writer is even more evident in his lust for places and for experience than it is in his relationship with the opposite sex. The modernist dictum "Make it new" is incomplete, applying to the work alone rather than to the life that produces the work. A Ph.D. candidate looking to reduce the matter to boring statistics or

torrid case studies would likely discover authors to be far more promiscuous lovers of experience than they are of women. Ten years after my arrival in the American Northwest my imaginative eye was already roving in the direction of the Southwest—an infidelity of the heart shortly betrayed by such subtle signs as gas receipts from filling stations in lost desert towns across Arizona, New Mexico, and southern Utah; manuscripts-in-progress with exotic settings; and iron-and-glass furniture imported from Mexico pushing New England antiques at home. For the next eight years I spent more and more time in the Southwest, while deepening and consolidating a familiarity with the North. Same old wife every night, Ed Abbey complained. It isn't that you don't love her still, just that a man needs excitement, freshness, color, romance—something *new*. Fortunately, it is permissible to deal with a locale differently than one is required to treat a woman.

As the world is well acquainted with men (and women) wishing to keep a hold on their old wives (or husbands) while acquiring new wives and lovers, so there are people determined to keep the past alive by annealing it to the present; to live the past in the present, while seeking to attach the future by the simple act of anticipating it. Of these people an overwhelming proportion are probably artists of some sort, for the very good reason that attempting to unite past, present, and future is the central aim of intellectual and spiritual existence, even if that goal is finally unrealizable in this life. Writers refuse to let go of anything: they want to pile their entire lives up inside their heads, never forgetting, never saying goodbye to whatever has happened to them in thought, action, or experience. In this they resemble the compulsive householder who carries junk upstairs in preference to throwing it away, except that writers don't want all that precious stuff in the attic, they want it laid out in the living room and on the front porch—a character flaw that makes them difficult people to live with emotionally. Unfortunately it is also an element essential to the writerly personality, like alcoholism or satyriasis, lacking which writers are hardly writers at all. The trait is shared even by perfectly sane and well-adjusted people who understand, better than authors, how to make it work for them at the level of normal existence. "It's not that I don't love Wyoming," Sissy Richardson explained as we drank a pitcher of beer together in a cantina in Mesilla, looking across the dark room to the white glare beyond the screened door. "Living in New Mexico has showed me Wyoming the way I never knew Wyoming was before. Of course I love Wyoming. I'll always love Wyoming." And Sissy is too intelligent a girl to be a writer.

In the Palacio Bar we drank red beer while a band including a bass viol, an accordion, and a guitar played the traditional Mexican songs. The musicians were old Mesilleros, like the patrons along the bar drinking beer and rum and requesting songs which they paid for afterward. Gray-haired men with dark, deeply creased faces, they sat facing the musicians with their drinks behind them, listening soberly and attentively, breaking into smiles and applause at the end of each song. The room was cool and pleasant, the wooden floor swept clean, the evening light bent by the lowered blinds reflecting from the long mirror back of the two rows of bottles. Admiring the tenor voice of the guitarist, watching the cellist stoop to pluck a low note, feeling the melancholy music loping out of Old Mexico, I experienced the exhilaration I remember from nearly 20 years ago, sitting in the roughneck bars of Wyoming.

"What made you decide to move to New Mexico?" I asked Sissy.

"It was the place I always wanted to

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see."

"What are you going to do when you're finished here?"

"That's a good question. How long do you plan on staying?"

"I don't know. As long as there's something to see."

Rita Madrid joined us to drink red beer and listen to the Mexican band. While it was playing she recalled for me a story I had heard on a visit to Mesilla some years before, about the woman who drowned her children in the Rio Grande and still haunts the scene of the killings. The locality of the town, Rita believes, is extremely active supernaturally. Some years ago a relative was putting her infant child down when she heard a knock at the door. The caller was an old woman dressed in black, holding a baby in her arms. Without speaking a word the woman indicated that she desired permission to enter the house; the hostess, stepping aside, was surprised to see that the child she carried was closely wrapped in a blanket identical to the one in which her own child was sleeping. The old woman accepted the seat offered her but she refused to explain what she had come for, and after several minutes of silence the mother returned to the bedroom to look in on the baby, which lay dead in its crib. Rushing in panic to the front of the house she found the room empty, and the old woman nowhere in sight on the lonely road. "Things happen all the time around here," Rita said. She added, "No one wants to talk about them anymore."

I found a house to my liking on the East Mesa, five miles from downtown at the edge of the creosote-bush desert with a view of the Organ Mountains rising against the eastern sky: *faux* adobe, on a nice-sized lot surrounded by a rock-and-cement wall topped by an iron fence, with flagstone patios front and back, shaded by pine and fruit trees and, behind the house, windrows of apricot trees filled with grackles screaming as they fought each other for the unripe fruit. A small fireplace allowed for fragrant mesquite-wood fires on cold desert nights in winter. Ten miles away at Doña Ana in the valley of the Rio Grande north of Las Cruces I made arrangements to put two horses on several acres of lush pasture watered by the acequias, with corrals, pecan trees for shade, and a stables to lodge them during the flood irrigation. Here in south-central New Mexico the price of hay is three times that in Wyoming, but with good pasture available six or seven months of the year consumption should be one-half to a third of average up north. If not, I will be exploring the wilderness of the Gila later in the summer by burro, or maybe mountain bike. For my horses, who have lived their lives on the sagebrush steppes of Wyoming, Doña Ana is going to seem like the Garden of Eden, even the Muslim Paradise. For myself, I have to look forward to the Gila, the Black Range, the Peloncillo and Chiricahua mountains, Mexico, season tickets to Señor Hurtado's bull ring in Juárez, Jim Rauen in Belen, Jim Catron in La Joya, Steve Bodio in Magdalena, Ernie Bulow in Gallup, and acquaintances in Taos, Albuquerque, and El Paso. After three days in Las Cruces there is nothing to do but hang around in the cantinas for a fourth day, out of the hundred-three degree heat, and fly back to Wyoming to pack up.

Among the many inconveniences of holding on to the past is the necessity of carrying the physical residue on your back like a tortoise: Eighteen years of living to transport by small convoy across 975 miles of mountain and desert country at the peak of the summertime heat. Our pioneer ancestors of the backcountry and the Old Southwest a century and a half ago had better sense. Restless, footloose, avid for change as any author, they were regularly on the move, hardly pausing to let the grass grow under their feet and between the stumps on the land they had finished clearing but which bored them now; eager to follow the westward caravans that passed their doorsteps in rapidly increasing numbers. Life was simpler in those days, when relatively few people had possessions in which to haul their possessions around with them wherever and whenever they chose. Once the decision had been made to move on there was nothing left for them but to pull the door to, whistle up the dogs, and go. ©

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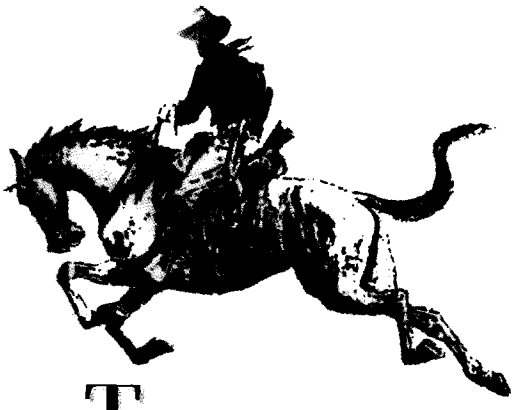

The senior editor for books at *Chronicles* has moved from the Wyoming locale described in his monthly column to New Mexico. He encourages *Chronicles* readers in the New Mexico area to get in touch with him by writing to 5021 Redland St., Las Cruces, New Mexico, 88011.

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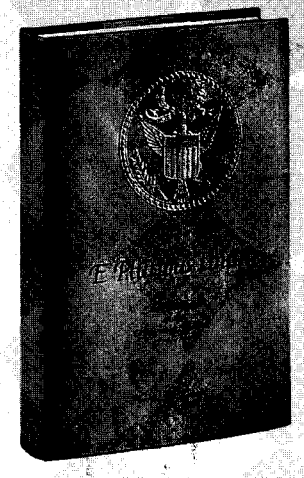
By Forrest McDonald



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